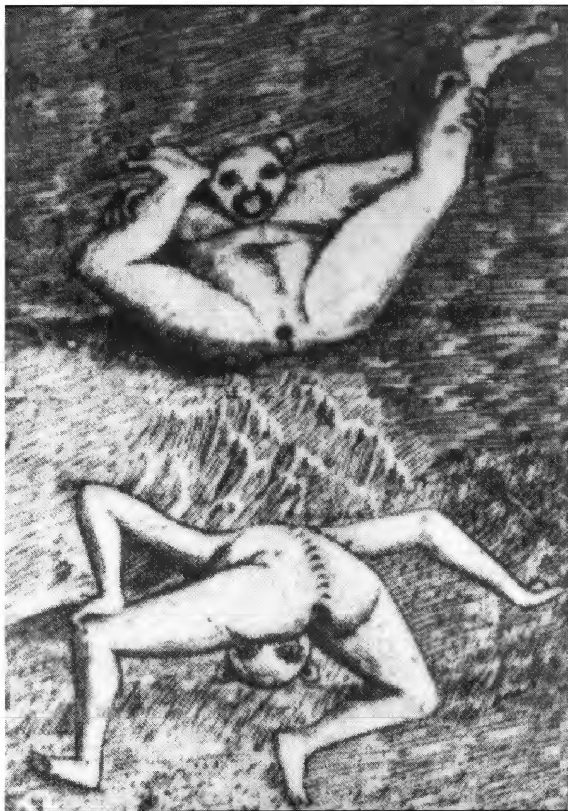


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HAHAHA

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EDITORIAL

Kind of brings a tear to the eye, doesn't it? Our anniversary issue: the big number 10! You'll notice there are more pages this time too, our little bonus gift to all our loyal readers. But wait! Some of you may be saying, "Hey, never mind the extra pages! Where's my *Critical Vision* book?" Well, don't panic, it's on its way. Nicely overrunning our scheduled release date as does pretty much all our stuff. This issue no exception.

And more goodies will follow. Hot on the heels of *Critical Vision* will be a slim volume of fiction: the late and unlamented Jesús Ignacio Aldapuerta's *The Eyes*. A very limited print run of probably the most unwholesome and offensive writings since de Sade ran out of toilet paper. Translated here for the first time into English from the original Spanish just for your jaded appetites. Anyone wanting more details and advance notification of its publication must send a SAE or IRC. Subscribers will automatically receive a mailshot and be given the opportunity to buy first. Planned for later this year are *Killer Komix II* and *Critical Vision II* which will concentrate on movies ~ the kind you like.

Meantime scuffle your way through our HaHaHa issue and chew your nails to the quick while waiting for *Headpress* #11: HoHoHo... nah, only kidding, next issue is gonna be:

SIN

David Slater

LAUGH? I COULD RUN A CHAINSAW THROUGH YOUR CORTEX. OR: WHY THE HUMOUR OF THE SITUATION SOMEHOW STRANGELY SEEMS TO BE SIDESTEPPING THE WHOLE FUCKING POINT...

Howard Lake

The joke is this: you are useless; you are more impotent than John Wayne Bobbit 10 seconds after Lorena did her thang...

The joke is also this: there's NOTHING you can do – wanna get ANGRY? Wanna get into some serious playback? Ha ha ha... Forget it: you might as well snuff yourself.

(But if you do... make the fucker spectacular, won't ya? Make it something we unhealthy types can have us a dam good snicker over subsequently; Hell, we're short enough for laffs these days, so make it something groovy if you have to do it – blow yourself up with TNT in EuroDisney, or go for self-immolation midway through the Burghley Horse Trials... for God's sake don't kiss your prick goodbye in a mundane, ignominious bedsit-style adieu. Why not make a li'l HISTORY, eh?...)

Of course, the joke can be more mundane, more down to earth – it could be Naomi Campbell's 'novel'... you know, the one Ms Crisp-Bag-Tits never actually knew the plot of? Or it could be Sir (and for what was that honour bestowed upon him? – has anyone ever found out?) Ivan Lawrence telling the world that a few spliffs *definitely* leads to a smack habit (he has Medical Evidence, you know). Or it could be Cilla Black picking up a cool £3million for two more series of *Blind Date*. Or it could be the Colin Stagg case. Or it could be Richard Littlejohn becoming the People's Voice. Or it could be... I don't need to go on, because I know that you, dear reader, are already close to chewing the carpet and fucking the cat up the bunghole in frustration. I know that YOU know better; that you know there's nothing short of wholesale assassination (and, shit, don't let me give you the idea) that can change a fucking thing about this entire parade of OH SUCH FUNSTERS, OH SUCH HILARIOUS WITS that make life in the 90s such a FUN thing, such a vibrant, ALIVE kinda existence...

And we'll do anything for a laff, us; anything to show we're game for a giggle as much as the next idiot; anything to prove we're as much a part of it, just as enthusiastic about this KERR-RAZZY thing called 'life', as everyone else. Oh yes, we can 'see the funny side' when Beadle pulls one of his wacky pranks – as the man himself says: you're a real star! Even if our business was on its uppers we'd

hand over our stock if Anneka Rice bulldozed her way in with a film crew in tow and told us it was for some orphan's home 'she' is building – a neat way of sidestepping public funding, that. We don't mind being patronised, bullied, revealed as dupes before millions on TV; we don't mind the fact that it's Jeremy Beadle with the £Million contract and the adulation while you sit there in the camera's gaze wearing a queasy shit-eating grin as the VT rolls of you falling for a set-up even a three-year-old could have seen through – anything rather than be the kind of bastard who refuses to laugh with the rest. Sure, the joke's on us, but what the hell? As JB says: you're the star! So that's alright, then...

Ahh, shit. But I'm missing the point. The joke isn't on the merry herd. The joke's on ME, and always has been. The joke's on the shape of my body, on the fact it doesn't match up to the ideal we're told (by the media) is the thing that BABES (ditto) want. The joke is on the opinions I hold, the fact they do not correspond with the Way Things Are (ditto again). The joke is on the fact that I might think that, as an adult, I'm treated like a retard in what I'm allowed to read or view. And then the joke stops, because THEN I am scum, filth, depraved, the kind of inhuman crud that will bring Society to it's knees.

Had sex in the Missionary Position lately? Well done – at least you're not some PERVERT with UNNATURAL DESIRES TOO EXTREME TO BE DESCRIBED IN A FAMILY NEWSPAPER. Oh, by the way, did I mention *The Sport*? Okay, as stated before, I'm a pornographer and what I do is artless trash; describe rape cases as though it was an excerpt from a pornoflick novelization and they call you a JOURNALIST. Yep, and I'm laffin'...

Jokes? Oh yeah, there's more. The joke is also this: why does anyone give a shit? The joke is on the 'Stop the M11' crowd; the joke is on the 'Who Killed Kennedy?' obsessives; the joke is on the 'Ronald McDonald is a corporate-hegemony-quasi-fascism' screamers; the joke is on anyone and everyone who says THIS SHIT STINKS...

The joke is on YOU. Let's be frank on this matter. The *crux*, please. You think you know what's REALLY happening; you understand the wheels within wheels; you see the shit raining down upon you and those around you; you see lies upon lies, bullshit presented as the Living Gospel and it irks you, it pisses you off... but it still comes: Naomi still picks up the bunce from her home; Cilla still banks her 3Mill; you still get busted for your dupe of *Cannibal Holocaust*

and the papers call it SNUFF; Ernest Saunders is still free and felching (in a strictly social sense, of course) the Queen Mum despite his Alzheimers diagnosis; Roger Levitt still holidays in Ghana despite his conviction for defrauding millions... ahh, you could laff and laff till the air runs out and, remember, IRONY means fuck-all.

All horses fer courses, innit?...

But you gotta laff, aint'cha? 'Cos, like my journalistic colleague and self-confessed speeduser Gary Bushell sez, AIDS don't MATTER, homelessness don't MATTER, poverty don't MATTER, starvation don't MATTER, wogs with their bollocks wired to the Main Grid don't MATTER, a projected civilisation where we all know our place, where we all eat shit and pronounce it a gourmet delicacy don't MATTER... not in the long run, not when you take into account the benefits accrued of being part of it all. Fuck, wot's wrong with you deadbeats? Why won't you get involved, join in the crowd? Lighten up, why don'tcha? For fuck's sake... CAN'T YOU TAKE A BLEEDIN' JOKE???

Answer is: 'Course I can, Gazza – blow your fuckin' head off and then I'll laugh. The Future isn't a boot stamping on a face forever; the Future is that we ALL become *lovable* Cockneys, thick as pigshit, bigoted as can be, and OF COURSE all subscribing to soaraway SKY TV... Lor, luvvaduck, strike a light, apples an' pears, look at the tits on that, I ain't got no farking opinion, me, but I'm a 'appy cunt, anyways, mustn't grumble...

KILL... But only if it's FUNNY, yeah?

The paradox is that when the time comes when the laughter has stop; when even humour can't defend you from the rising tide of iniquity and despair... why, that's the moment you find yourself laughing fit to bust a gut. Only there's a faintly hysterical edge to your laffing – no so much hahaha, more hahahahahahahahaha (and continue until vomiting is induced). What you want is normalcy, something stable on which to get a grip; what you get is derangement, madness, psychosis; what you get is a world capsized on its side with its self-righting mechanism – humanity, compassion, trust and affection etc and so on – shot to shit, way beyond repair. Everything is off-balance; everything is, if not completely inverted, then at least 50% on the way there...

Humour is turning turtle, too. Then humour always was powered by the misfortune of others – man slips on banana skin and breaks his fuckin' neck: hahaha. For years, we didn't have a term for the thing. Now we have Schadenfreude: pleasure in the misfortune of others. Now we know what we were giggling about all that time and, oh yeah, FOR SURE we oughta feel real GUILTY about it, right?

Wrong. We don't. See, our basic humorous sensibilities remain the same. Lorena Bobbit makes with the ol' El Emasculato and IT'S FUNNY, it's

Man Slips On Banana Skin updated for the 90s. Oh yeah, every red-blooded choad-totin' fella winces when he thinks about it, but that sensation vanishes the next time you cum and, admit it, YOU thought it was a gas, didn't ya? Didn't happen to you and, besides, John Wayne was a grade-10 asshole anyways, probably deserved the salami-slice, so ultimately the thing becomes a joke. And what's the trouble? He got it sewn back didn't he? ...

Some say you gotta laff or else you'd cry. This is patently bullshit; you laugh because you WANT to laugh. Oh, you set yourself certain boundaries and parameters, most of them delineated by the unspoken codes and regulations of the society into which you were born. You can't find it in yourself to laugh at the genocide in Rwanda, or at the atrophied cadavers of AIDS victims, 'cause that would be in BAD TASTE, wouldn't it? Could leave a nasty taste in your mouth. Funny thing is, SOME folks can find humour in wholesale slaughter. They're usually those responsible for it: machete-wielding RPF baby-hackers had no trouble getting a giggle out of *slicin'* and *dicin'*; mass-raping Serbs had themselves a whale of a snicker over their gnarly-dicked escapades; Venables and Thompson wuz HAVING FUN up on that railway embankment.

STOP! HOLD IT RIGHT THERE. You gone too far, MFucker. Just gone TOO FUCKING FAR. Some nerves are more raw and tender than others. Would you have written that last line of that paragraph had you been living in Liverpool? Would you have written the paragraph at all had you – YOU, Lake – experienced, directly or indirectly, horror on that extreme scale? Could you bring yourself to even couch a concept like that were you not living a comfortable, cushioned voyeuristic pussy-existence far away from where the shit hits the fan and sticks like napalm?

What you're asking, in essence, is does the writer have EMPATHY. And the answer would, of course, be yes x1000. And the answer would, of course, be a complete falsehood. Because here's the bottom line: you can WANT to empathize with those who suffer; you can want to FEEL for those scarred to the soul by tragedy; you can want to UNDERSTAND their anguish... But that's impossible, it cannot be done. In a civilisation where the omnipresent media brings every drop of blood spilled, every child's tears, every cataclysm from across the planet right into our living room, you might think it'd mean your empathy with those who suffer would be increased a hundredfold, wouldn't you?

Alas, the reverse applies and suffering becomes so much televisual wallpaper. It becomes mundane and everyday and you soon develop a tolerance. One murdered child, one massacred race, goes by now almost unnoticed in the welter of images that have long since blurred into meaningless nothing. The news bulletin that begins with murder, rape and

unfathomable atrocities ends with a feelgood item about skateboarding Basset Hounds; Nick Ross signs off *Crimewatch* with "don't have nightmares now" and everything's all right in the world. Maybe 300 years ago, some depraved crime *mattered* because the only reason you heard about it at all was because it occurred on your very doorstep and it affected those you knew; in the 90s we are expected to mourn strangers and those we would never have known to have existed or died had not CNN had a camera right there to bring you the vivid cruelty of their demise in glorious sanguineous technicolour.

But all the same, you're not supposed to snicker. However immured you have become to the daily round of death and destruction, not even the faintest twitch of the lips is permitted or you run the risk of being deemed SICK or TWISTED. And by whom? Now here's a funny thing... no one is certain who establishes the criteria regarding humour. Is it Society? But this is, we are forever being told, a democracy and you are therefore entitled to Free Speech and ergo to crack a funny about whatever you wish. Thus, humour depends on other factors: the company you keep, the location in which the joke is delivered, as to whether or not you get the shit kicked out of you. It comes down to those nebulous ideas of a consensus conscience, where 'good' or 'bad' taste is determined by the milieu. Again, bogus in essence, for consensus, as we already know, is determined not by individual minds working in unison, but by those individual minds being directed and coaxed towards a homogenized viewpoint by those who control information, who set the STANDARDS for 'socially acceptable' behaviour. And taking into account some of the outlandish ideas these movers and shakers have regarding acceptable behaviour, what sad bastard would take the line of Murdoch, Major, Clinton, the PC lobby, TV network chiefs et al when it comes to what is FUNNY or not?

Humour is permanently in a state of flux, yet some things are always a laff riot. But this is where the inconsistencies creep in that demonstrate how fucked up the deal has become. Nothing raises a snigger like a bizarre demise or some real freaky mental aberration. Yesterday I was reading about the case of Karl Watkins. Remember him? He was the guy from Redditch who was sexually attracted to pavements, was found five times in the street, keks round his ankles, humping the cracks. Got 18 months gaol in Feb 93... Eighteen months of, doubtless, hell behind bars with all the loathing and torment and piss-drenched dinners traditionally doled out to sex cases. Jesus, the guy suffered with a year-and-a-half of time, but you forget that because you can't get away from the hilarious mental image of this guy trying to fuck a pavement. His life was destroyed, he may never recover from the ordeal of

trial, confinement and public humiliation but... HE FUCKED PAVEMENTS!! Ain't that the FUNNIEST thing you heard this week? It was in all the tabloids we read; it was a blast for them – made a change from reporting rape cases in salacious detail followed by a two-page spread on how the 'Saucy Schoolgirl' look is sweeping the nation. Hey, maybe YOU know someone with a peculiar sex fetish... Ring our hotline on 071...

The FUNNY thing is the charge on which Watkins was eventually sent down... OUTRAGING PUBLIC DECENCY. Hmmm, go figure...

Humour, the psychologists are forever telling us, is a defence mechanism. By making light of tragedy we are supposed to be somehow circumventing the real distress we feel at another's suffering. Does that hold water? Man slips on banana skin, breaks neck, hahaha. He's a paraplegic, hahaha. Tain't funny, boy! Of course not, because what is or is not funny is always reliant on the extent of another's misfortune. Slipping on banana skin and bruising your arse = FUNNY. Slipping on banana skin, breaking neck = you SICK fucker... if it makes you laff any.

Yet you still can't help wondering... I mean, the UK is about as dysfunctional as it gets when it comes to what raises a chuckle. Bank manager caught wearing womens' frillies in a brothel: what a sick, sad, twisted bastard he is... CUT: Primetime, Saturday night, Eddie Large teetering around in high heels, leather mini in absurd Tina Turner takeoff... why, it's the FUNNIEST thing I ever did see. Nazis firebomb Asian family, kill many... HORROR UNBOUNDED, the sickening truth about Britain in the 90s etc... CUT: Bernard Manning, Jim Davidson... there were this nig-nog, right? ... And you wonder why *Meng & Ecker* caught so much flak...

All humour has a darkside, always has, only whereas the unsavoury aspect of any joke was once rooted in the worst case scenario, in something so outlandish or evil the joketeller and his audience could never imagine it REALLY occurring, now the worst case scenario is always with us and the undertow of any gag is unavoidably something we KNOW not only could happen, but more than likely HAS happened. It is virtually impossible for there to be anything you could call 'innocent' humour now, every crack is indelibly tainted by its real-life subtext – *'Allo 'Allo*, Gary Bushell will doubtless tell you, is a perfect example of 'classic' British humour: bawdy innuendo, poking gentle fun at foreigners, gays, a wry send-up of WW2, OR, then again, how about misogyny, sexism, xenophobia, homophobia, a blind disregard for genocide, OR... For fuck's sake, mate, where's your SENSE OF HUMOUR???

No wonder the shitsuckers in all their guises – Pro-Lifers, Politically Correct, Jesusfreaks etc – are running rampant. They're capitalizing on what we

all know, the undertow of our times, the inescapable feeling of desperation in which we are all enmired. The common thread all these fuckwits share is their singular lack of humour: have you ever heard a PC joke? Anything funny about the desire to maintain a chronic unwanted pregnancy rate? I mean, correct me if I'm wrong, but the Bible's not exactly a chuckle a minute, is it? That most of these imbecilic concepts hail from America is hardly surprising, since there is a nation bereft of irony and so collectively dumb they cannot understand that the existence and power of something as inherently evil as NRA or the KKK is, in itself, a JOKE, and a real sick one at that.

But you gotta laff, ain'tcha? You gotta laff, or else you'd cry. Yep, it's a bad, sad, mad world out there and there aren't enough tears to cry for every disaster, every famine, every instance of genocide, just as there's no feeling left to respond to such calamity in the way you maybe think should. But WHY should you? Who says you shouldn't laugh in the face of disaster? Who says you shouldn't see the rib-snapping irony in the way decisions are continually made that make our lives that little bit harder and in fact that you alone seem to understand the inherent insanity of it all while those around you continue to suck on candy-coated shit-sticks and pronounce them YUMMY!? If you decide, as more and more appear to be deciding, to give up on the whole thing and go out in that aforementioned blaze of doomed hilarity, should I mourn your passing, or should I laugh along, seeing the joke as you intended it to be seen, as a comment on the fact that life itself is a sick joke? And when the carcinogens I've

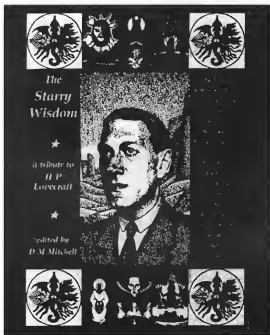
had pumped into me, both willingly and unsuspectingly, throughout my life finally exact their toll and my cancer lays me low, will I take offence if you think it amusing? Hell, I'll probably crack a few funnies myself, in some futile attempt to soften the blow. And you'll probably laugh along with me, so as not to hurt my feelings. Thanks, I'll appreciate your humanity: death is the biggest gag of all: that's why they save it for last...

Until then, however, I'm gonna laugh at whatever tickles me and fuck those who can't see the joke. I'm gonna search for humour in everything, hunt for irony in disaster, find mirth in sadness, detect a lighter side to despair. You see, you MUST... Allow this downward spiral to take you with it and you'll never have a chance of surviving the slurry of a civilization sinking under the waterline. The more you laugh, the more you're maintaining your sanity and keeping despair at bay. The blacker the times become, the blacker the comedy gets (just ask Stephen Milligan). Laugh until you choke and, with a little luck, you might miss the point that one of the biggest jokes of them all is none other than YOURSELF. Hahahahahahaha.

Shit, who'd have thought humour could make you so FUCKING DEPRESSED???

Yours, reaching for the medicine cabinet...

LAKE



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favourite SUN

Simon Whitechapel

He's not famous nowadays, but he's appeared in some surprising places. An Arthur Conan Doyle short story describes him as "the most grotesque of all monarchs... unspeakable... with foul mind and painted face".¹ In Maria Luisa Ambrosini's history of the secret Vatican archives, he races an elephant-drawn chariot on Vatican hill.² Colin Wilson's *A Criminal History of Mankind* takes in his obsessive interest in prostitutes and murder on a lavatory as "light relief" from "the serious business of conspiracy and assassination" in the history of ancient Rome.³

He is, was, the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antonius, a.k.a. Varius Avitus Bassianus, a.k.a. Sardanapalus, a.k.a. Elagabalus, a.k.a. finally and most definitively, Heliogabalus. He is probably the most notorious nancy-boy in classical history. The ancient gossip about his extravagances, sexual, religious and culinary, is richer and wilder than that for any other ancient figure. *Aelius Lampridius*, one of his first biographers, compares him to Nero, and Nero, mother-fucker, mass-murderer, poetaster, comes off second-worst. His only full-length biographer in English, an Oxford classicist called John Stuart Hay, wrote of certain biographical details in *Lampridius's Vita Heliogabali*⁴ that they had

never been translated into English, to the writer's knowledge, nor has he any intention of undertaking the work at this present or any other time, as he has no desire to land himself, with the printers and publishers, in the dock at the Old Bailey.

"This present time" was 1911. Heliogabalus was not widely known in 1911, but he was known. Edward Gibbon sticks the knife into him and twists for nearly a dozen elegant, epigrammatic paragraphs in *The Decline and Fall*: "a conspiracy of women and eunuchs... never acted like a man... wasted many months in luxurious progress... his eyebrows were tinged with black, his cheeks painted with red and white... effeminate luxury of Oriental despotism... a chorus of Syrian damsels... lascivious dances to the sound of barbarian music... abandoned himself to the grossest pleasures... his memory was branded with eternal infamy..."⁵

Which isn't at all bad going for someone who never left his teens: Heliogabalus was born in the city of Emesa in Syria in 204 AD and assassinated in Rome in 222. He has been abused ever since, first by sycophants of the dynasty he was removed to make way for, then by Christian historians, anxious to express their disgust at both his sex-life and his monotheistic, Christ-challenging religion. All of the stories about Heliogabalus are interesting; not all of them are true. He certainly was – some of the time – a passive homosexual who said he would rather die than be separated from his male lover, the charioteer Hierocles; he didn't, almost certainly, undergo a castrative operation designed to as nearly turn him into a woman as the medical knowledge of third-century Rome allowed. The English biographer mentioned above, Stuart Hay, is scornful of much of what was written about him, but allows more than enough to make him interesting to most people with an interest in the perverse and the bizarre.

But that isn't to say that none of his life-story is familiar. Money brought him to the imperial throne, and money would eventually drag him from it. His family was the wealthiest in Emesa, the centre of the worship of a stony black phallus fallen from heaven centuries before and deified under the name of the sun-god Elah-Gabal.⁶ Heliogabalus became the god's high priest as part of the scheming of his paternal grandmother, Julia Maesa. Under the Emperors Septimius Severus (193-211) and Caracalla (211-7) she, with Heliogabalus' mother Julia Soaemias Bassania, had lived in high honour in Rome: Julia Bassania, indeed, was rumoured to have been Caracalla's lover: her family name was the same as the Emperor's and Heliogabalus resembled him. When Caracalla was assassinated in 217 after drawing apart from his bodyguard for "purposes of natural relief"⁷, these facts became highly significant. Opilius Macrinus, an Arab lawyer on Caracalla's staff, was best positioned to take advantage of the vacant throne: he had, after all, known about the assassination in advance, because he had planned it.⁸ Once he was Emperor, Macrinus banished Heliogabalus' family to its native city. This was probably a very stupid thing to do: Maesa's skill at intrigue had been polished by twenty-five years

amongst the back-stabbings and poisonings of Rome; the family's wealth was based on and most easily accessible at Emesa; last and not least significant, much of the Roman army in the East was stationed at Emesa. Caracalla had been very popular with the army: blood and gold had been spent lavishly during his reign by and for it. When Heliogabalus' resemblance to the late Emperor was pointed out to the legionaries and underlined with gifts of gold, rebellion against Macrinus became certain. Heliogabalus' lascivious dances at Elah-Gebal's shrine were probably intended to cement the legionaries' loyalty: sun-gods had always been sympathetic to military machismo, and military machismo, in the classical period, did not necessarily demand of its sex objects that a pretty face be accompanied by breasts and vagina.

Following propitious portents in the form of an eclipse⁸ and comet, Heliogabalus was proclaimed Emperor by the army in Emesa. Macrinus sent a praetorian prefect, Ulpianus, to put the rebellion down and cut off and deliver to him Heliogabalus' head. In due course a head was delivered, but it was not the one Macrinus had expected or wanted. Shortly afterwards, following a further battle at a place called Immæ (won for Heliogabalus by the generalship of his eunuch-tutor Gannys), Macrinus and his son Diadumenianus were themselves dead. Without very much trouble at all, Heliogabalus had become Emperor and the resources of the greatest empire the world had ever seen, at almost the height of its power and wealth, were his. He would have less than four years to exploit them.

According to Gibbon, "he wasted many months in luxurious progress" before arriving in Rome from Syria. This is true. It was partly because of his determination to be accompanied by the giant black phallus that represented Elah-Gebal on earth. When

he finally arrived in Rome, his religion did not especially please the Romans: Elah-Gebal was, like the Jewish Yahweh, a Deus Solus, or only God, and pagan Rome conducted its religious affairs according to the principle of the more, the merrier. Heliogabalus' attempt to set up Elah-Gebal as a supreme deity to which all others were merely subordinate was certainly unpopular, if not as unpopular as his biographers would later claim: as Hay points out, Jewish and Christian monotheism involves persecution and suppression, and Heliogabalus didn't persecute the followers of other gods, simply asked them to recognise Elah-Gebal's

supremacy. This was, however, quite bad enough.

Further scandal is said to have been caused by the mechanics of Elah-Gebal's worship. Heliogabalus had a vast new temple, the Eliogabalium, built to house him. Elah-Gebal was brought to it in a chariot drawn by six white horses over streets covered with yellow sand and gold-dust and lined with torch-waving, flower-strewing crowds. Other gods and goddesses were collected from all over Rome and her empire to fill the temple. Heliogabalus tried, blasphemously to the orthodox pagan, to marry Vesta, Rome's patron goddess, to Elah-Gebal: oddly enough Vesta too was represented on earth by a black lithophallus. The marriage, like Heliogabalus' own with

a vestal virgin called Julia Aquilia Severa, was unsuccessful, and the Phoenician moon-goddess Tanit was sent for from Carthage (Gibbon sardonically suggests that a robust Roman deity had been too much for an effete eastern). More familiar in kind but as shocking in scale were the daily rituals enacted in Elah-Gebal's honour. Heliogabalus led Emesan priests and priestesses in frenzied dances to the sound of clashing cymbals and wailing eastern instruments; attendance was compulsory for the staid and middle-aged Senate.



He carried out, or supervised, the daily sacrifice of dozens of cattle and sheep, whose blood flowed from the altars in great streams mingled with "rare and costly wines".¹⁰ According to some biographers, Heliogabalus was prepared to cut more than the throats of animals for Elah-Gabal's aggrandizement. As part of the negotiations with the priests of Cybele for cult-objects from their temple, he is said to have undergone full initiation into the goddess's worship, which would have involved castration. The story is probably apocryphal: Hay suggests that Heliogabalus was too fond of pleasure to deprive himself of a chief source of it.

Another chief source was dressing up. It's said Heliogabalus never wore anything but silk and never wore the same silk twice. Silk, which had to be brought vast distances from China, was hugely expensive in Roman times. Heliogabalus had his dyed purple and embroidered with gold, and set it off with gilded leather sandals with thigh-high strapping, and with heavy gold rings, bracelets and necklaces. Like Caligula, Nero, and many other Romans rich enough to afford them, he made heavy use of perfumes and aromatic spices, not only on his person but also in the heating and lighting of his palaces.

His feasts were even more extravagant: "guests on silver beds... fanned by boys whose curly hair they used as napkins... courses served on silver platters large enough to cover the tables... sows' breasts with Lybian truffles; dormice baked in poppies and honey; peacocks' tongues flavoured with cinnamon; oysters stewed in fish-intestine paste; flamingo, pheasant, peacock and thrush brains... a yellow pig from which, when carved, hot sausages fell and live thrushes flew"¹¹ and "camels' heels, ostriches' brains... peas with grains of gold, beans and amber, quail powdered with pearl dust, lentils and rubies, spiders in jelly, fig-peckers served in pastry".¹² Already prolonged bouts of gluttony were sometimes made longer by the need for a new set of gold or silver utensils and cutlery after Heliogabalus had given the old to a guest who made a pleasing or witty remark, or a change of table-clothes after each course: Heliogabalus liked to have the menu embroidered on them, along with pictures of the individual dishes. He offered huge rewards for new foods and sauces, particularly when the latter were intended for sea-food: "His fish-sauce was a triumph of the culinary art."¹³

However, he ate sea-food only when he was far enough away from the sea to make its provision for him a complicated and costly business, involving the transportation of fish to "immense salt-water tanks he had constructed amongst the mountains".¹⁴ He liked sausages made of lamprey roe, lobster, oyster and crayfish. The after-effects of such rich food are said to have been relieved in vases of gold, onyx and myrrhin (the last being a mysterious

substance of enormous worth, possibly a metal, possibly a precious stone).

Heliogabalus' great liking for practical jokes was also indulged at the dinner table. While he gorged on exotic meats and fruits, his guests and minions would be expected to enjoy superficially identical fare made of wax and crystal. Comfortable air-cushion seating would be surreptitiously deflated in mid-meal, throwing diners sprawling to the marble floors of the dining chamber. When the diners were overcome by wine later on, they would be carried off to bedrooms, and probably forget their hangovers when they awoke the following day to find themselves under the unblinking scrutiny of the Emperor's pet tigers and leopards, brought to share their bedrooms with them while they slept.¹⁵ At other times, they might find themselves suddenly buried under masses of the flowers dropped through ceiling panels: according to Lampadius, the weight was sometimes enough to cause suffocation; according to Hay, Heliogabalus never carried his practical jokes as far as murder.

Which is not to say that he wasn't prepared to be entertained by death in the right setting. The gladiatorial games are chiefly remembered nowadays because they were nasty, brutish and not at all short. They actually embodied an eternal political truth: doing unpleasant things to foreigners and criminals is good for popularity. Margaret Thatcher won an election by having foreigners killed in the South Atlantic; Roman politicians used to win elections by having foreigners killed at home. Emperors weren't elected but needed popularity in the same way, and bought it in the same way. Heliogabalus' games involved the wholesale slaughter of humans and animals in the traditional manner, though he reportedly added such personal touches as having naval battles fought on a lake of wine created within the arena.¹⁶ He was also reportedly the sponsor of a troupe of trained lions with gilded manes who walked on tight-ropes, wrote obscenities in Greek, and danced to the accompaniment of cymbals played by one of their own number.¹⁷

Heliogabalus' passion for chariot-racing was also indulged in the arena. During his reign, the crowds cheered races involving not only horses but also stags, lions, tigers, dogs, and naked women. Heliogabalus himself raced chariots drawn by camels and elephants over Vatican hill and the slowly filling Christian necropolis there, "crushing tombs that were in the way".¹⁸ At other times, he was drawn by beautiful naked women or, dressed as the god Bacchus, by lions and tigers. His guests were invited to drive chariots harnessed to four wild stags over gold and silver dust outside his dining rooms, and Heliogabalus was reportedly surprised at their lack of his own recklessness and skill.

Money spent in these ways, unlike that spent on

the worship of Elah-Gebal, did nothing to damage Heliogabalus' standing in Rome. The Roman proletariat had adored Nero for his extravagance, and Nero seemed more a forerunner to Heliogabalus than Heliogabalus a successor to Nero. Heliogabalus didn't only like to enjoy himself: he liked to be liked. He spent extravagantly on himself, and extravagantly on others. He held lotteries with prizes that might be lumps of beef, or lumps of gold and silver. He gave large sums of money to Rome's prostitutes, to whom he reportedly owed the inspiration for much of his maquillage and many of his sexual practices.

But his generosity, pleasing to many, was probably as much responsible for his eventual murder as his religion, pleasing to few. His grandmother Maesa had placed him on the throne for her own ends; once he was there, Heliogabalus used Rome's power and wealth to please himself, not her. Maesa switched her allegiance to Heliogabalus' half-brother (or cousin) Alexianus, and the same money and conspiratorial skills that had raised Heliogabalus to the purple started to work to take it from him. Whether, as Hay suggests, Heliogabalus was too good-natured and open-hearted to play Maesa at her own game, or too busy enjoying himself to notice or care that a conspiracy was under way, Maesa proved as successful at destroying the Emperor as she had been at creating him. Now it was Alexianus' resemblance to the beloved Caracalla that was pointed out to the legions and underlined with gold, and Heliogabalus' lack of popularity with the Senate was exploited to undermine his position. Yet the circumstances, political and literal, of Heliogabalus' death remain obscure. According to his detractors, he finally saw the need to kill Alexianus, whom he had been tricked or persuaded into adopting as his heir, and the soldiers rose against him to protect their new favourite. Again according to his detractors, Heliogabalus sought refuge in a barracks *latrina*, was killed there, dragged to the Tiber and thrown in.¹⁹ According to Hay, only the fact that he was assassinated is certain; why and how are not.

But he had been expecting death. Astrologers brought with him from Emesa had warned him of it, and he had prepared for it. A tower had been built above a pavement of gold encrusted with precious stones, onto which he intended to throw himself at the right moment, if this could be calculated. Lampridius says he carried small boxes carved from emerald and ruby and containing poisons and purple silk strangling cords around with him constantly. Perhaps he had time to climb the tower or use his small boxes when he learned the soldiers were searching for him. A purple-clad death-plunge onto gold and jewels or death by exotic poison from a ruby container would have been a fitting end to his life, and perhaps a Roman March would provide a

sunny day for the occasion. What happened to his body afterwards probably didn't matter much to him. After all, he was what Hay calls a "Psycho-Sexual Hermaphrodite",²⁰ and he presumably believed that the afterlife had something special in store for him. If Elah-Gebal's earthly phallus needed six horses to transport it, what on earth, or off it, would the heavenly original be like?

But Heliogabalus had certainly made strenuous efforts to prepare himself for the encounter. There are hilarious details in Lampridius' *Vita* of his constant search for men with "large organs": in order to increase the opportunities for the spotting of exceptional specimens, he had public baths in one of his palaces, and made "the baths of Plautianus available to the people".²¹ Sailors are particularly mentioned as one of the groups the search was pursued amongst. The key to preferment in Heliogabalus' Rome was simple: "enormous private parts." A muleteer was in charge of inheritance tax, and a courier, cook, and locksmith filled other important posts.

Heliogabalus' passion for well-endowed male lovers was not good for his reputation. Despite the strenuous efforts of present-day gays and lesbians to provide themselves with millennia of tradition by occupying the history of classical homo-eroticism, a great deal needs to be suppressed in order to produce a suitably politically correct picture. Classical homosexuality had very definite limits and was never acceptable to everyone at every period, and is in fact far easier to understand as a means of perpetuating patriarchy than as an expression of the enviable openness and tolerance of pagan society. Adult males did not bugger each other: adult males buggered boys and youths. Anyone who continued to enjoy or allow passive anal intercourse after the appearance of his facial and body hair was viewed with disgust at worst, amused contempt at best. A passive role in sex was regarded as effeminate, just about tolerable in a hairless adolescent, reprehensible in a hirsute adult male. Heliogabalus, who had passed puberty, should not still have been playing the passive role, and the fact that he depilated his entire body in mimicry of pre-pubesence increased the seriousness of his offence against traditional male values.

But how homosexual was Heliogabalus? Were his biographers hostile because of the disgusting details of his *bios*, or were the details of his *bios* disgusting because his biographers were hostile? The answer is probably both. Lampridius certainly exaggerated his crimes, and because heterosexual excesses in a male, then as now, were far less culpable than homosexual, it's Heliogabalus-as-catamite that the *Vita* concentrates on. One prominent heterosexual aspect of his life is mentioned as wicked not because it was heterosexual but because it offended against

religion. Heliogabalus married a vestal virgin. It's impossible for a twentieth-century reader to fully comprehend how shocking this was even in decadent third-century Rome. The Vestals enjoyed great privileges and suffered terrible punishment if they broke their thirty-year vow of chastity: burial alive. Of course, although the most breath-taking heights of religious hypocrisy were scaled only after the triumph of Christianity, pagan Vestals are known to have broken their vows and escaped punishment. Marriage, however, was taking things too far, and if the Vestal herself, Julia Aquilia Severa, could not be blamed, Heliogabalus certainly could. He flaunted his flouting of Rome's religious sensitivities by later divorcing and re-marrying her.

That the marriage was consummated on either occasion is uncertain. None of Heliogabalus' three brides was chosen for her beauty, rather for her suitability for breeding, and Heliogabalus is said by Lampridius to have vowed not to have a son in case he turned out to be thrifty. All the same there are hints that Heliogabalus had hearty heterosexual appetites too. Lampridius says that he sometimes gave twenty-four-course banquets, between each course of which he and his friends would bathe and "have intercourse" with women. At other times he would bathe with women and help them to shave their pubic hair, scandalously saving and using the same depilatory ointments on his own beard. Elsewhere Lampridius says that Heliogabalus "twice is more than enough" attitude to clothes, shoes and jewellery also applied to women: "he never had intercourse with the same woman twice, except for his wife." The naked women he used to draw his "jewelled and gilded" chariots are described as "very beautiful", and were perhaps chosen for more than their aesthetic appeal.

But are these heterosexual touches added, invented spice for the *Vita*, or based on facts that became obscured and mostly forgotten because of Heliogabalus' more startling and shocking homosexual activities? It's difficult to say, but if Heliogabalus is claimed as a definite psycho-sexual type, a later exemplar of the same type can be used as evidence that he was more a bisexual libertine than an overwhelmingly or even mostly homosexual one.

The picture of Heliogabalus' character drawn in Lampridius' *Vita* is very strongly reminiscent of another infamous historical figure, who also has strong claims to a more prominent place in gay history, but who will undoubtedly be always denied this place because he isn't alas a positive role model (and gay politics, like feminism, are often far less about truth and justice than about self-aggrandizement and the pursuit of power). Like Heliogabalus, the Marquis de Sade was extremely extravagant, extremely fond of rich and flavoursome food,



de Sade's palate was most keenly excited by pastry and sweets. He was capable of wolfing down frightening quantities, and in the solitude of his cell he sometimes indulged in veritable orgies of meringues, biscuits, macaroons, preserves, marmalades, jellies, syrups, marshmallows, fresh and preserved fruits, and candied chestnuts.²²

and extremely fond of being bugged by men with large *membra viriles*. Like Heliogabalus, de Sade spent a great deal of his time with prostitutes, and if Lampridius is to be believed (most modern commentators are united in saying he isn't) Heliogabalus enjoyed in reality what de Sade enjoyed in masturbatory fantasy: "Heliogabalus also sacrificed human victims... boys that were noble and good-looking... he inspected children's innards and tortured his victims according to his own native ritual." There was an alleged added Sadean refinement in that he preferred to sacrifice boys both of whose parents were still alive: "I suppose this was in order that the sorrow should be greater."

And still the similarities come. Like Heliogabalus, de Sade hated authority, and mocked and undermined it at every opportunity. Like Heliogabalus, de Sade believed that pleasure was the *summum bonum*, and like Heliogabalus, he suffered for his dedicated pursuit of it. He was even threatened with death for the same reason as Heliogabalus actually met it: in 1772 he and his

impressively weaponed valet were sentenced to death in absentia for sodomy, and burnt in effigy at Aix.

And yet de Sade is not thought of as "gay". Of course, he wasn't – but then he isn't generally thought of as bisexual either, and he was certainly in some sense bisexual. Heliogabalus, who was similar to de Sade in so many ways, is thought of as gay, and exclusively so: one prominent modern classical historian says "[he] appears to have been a complete invert".²³

Perhaps. He was a complete hedonist, and de Sade lyricizes the powerfully pleasurable sensations of being buggered more than once. According to de Sade, buggering while being buggered was even better ("a feat that must have required remarkable timing" Colin Wilson remarks in *The Misfits*).²⁴ Perhaps Heliogabalus found the same: according to Lampadius, he "knew well all the arrangements of Tiberius and Caligula and Nero" – "arrangements" is a euphemism for sexual positioning in groups.

A single very large apparent difference between Heliogabalus and de Sade can be used to complete an argument for Heliogabalus' bi- (or omni-) sexuality. Heliogabalus was a believer in God, a theist in a strictly monolithic sense. De Sade is one of the most famous, or infamous, atheists who have ever lived. The contradiction seems very strong.

Perhaps not. Sir Richard Burton once remarked that the more he studied religion, the more he became convinced that man never worshipped anything but himself. Heliogabalus certainly worshipped an aspect of himself: his own capacity for pleasure. Elah-Gabal was personified by a giant phallus of never-softening stone. What could be more suitable as a deification of male pleasure, heterosexual, homosexual, or both? What could better symbolize the Sadean philosophy of life?

De Sade mentions Heliogabalus at least once in his works – and abuses him. There may be an immense irony in this, and no-one would have been better qualified to recognise it than de Sade. The truth may be that Heliogabalus was in reality the polymorphous pervert and epicurean that de Sade could only be in fantasy, fucking and being fucked by men and women, pursuing all forms of pleasure to the utmost of the nearly inexhaustible capacity of an entire empire. Christianity and puritanical paganism may have distorted and suppressed aspects of his life, producing the screamingly bigoted queen against which de Sade, the supreme anti-Christian im-Puritan, would later inveigh.

Whatever the full truth about Heliogabalus, his unique position in the history of perverse hedonism will probably remain unchallenged for ever. It's very difficult to see how anyone will ever again have his opportunities, and very difficult too to see anyone ever being as well qualified to exploit them. The only figure I can think of whose life begins to

approach the precocity and intensity of Heliogabalus' is Rimbaud, and Rimbaud is remembered mostly for what he wrote. Heliogabalus is remembered entirely for what he lived.

NOTES

1. In 'Giant Maximin', from Conan Doyle's *Tales of Long Ago*
2. *The Secret Archives of the Vatican*, Maria Luisa Ambrosini (with Mary Willis).
3. pgs. 226-227 of the 1984 Grafton paperback
4. Later scholarship has proved that Ælius Lampadius was merely one of several pseudonyms adopted by a mysterious figure who wrote biographies of emperors from Hadrian to Heliogabalus. For further discussion see Anthony Birley's translation of these in *The Lives of the Later Caesars: The First Part of the Augustan History*.
5. Chap. V of Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*
6. Gibbon records the speculation that the name is formed from elements meaning 'the plastic or forming god ... a proper or even happy choice [for a sun-god]'; Heliogabalus is a Hellenic folk-etymologization of it, given to the god's chief worshipper after his death.
7. John Stuart Hay, *The Amazing Emperor Heliogabalus*, MacMillan, London, 1911, pg. 42
8. The plot was precipitated when Caracalla was sent letters by his mother, warning him of Macrinus' treachery. On the day in question Caracalla unfortunately had no time to read his mail when it was delivered, and ordered Macrinus to provide him with a resumé of important points. *Ibid.*, pg. 43
9. Hay doesn't say, or doesn't know, whether this was lunar or solar. *Ibid.*, pg. 55
10. *Ibid.*, pg. 115.
11. Slightly adapted from Hay's translation of the description of a feast held by the equestrian Maecenas during the reign of Augustus.
12. These are said to have actually been served by Heliogabalus (*Ibid.*, pg. 237)
13. *Ibid.*, pg. 259
14. *Ibid.*, pg. 258
15. Hay says these jokes were annoying but harmless to the perpetrators; Heliogabalus' ancient biographers say they sometimes had fatal consequences.
16. Naval battles on artificial lakes of water were probably passé by the time of Heliogabalus' reign. See Daniel P. Mannix, *Those About to Die*.
17. Such stories are more than a little incredible nowadays, but Roman animal trainers were able to test and reject thousands of animals in the search for suitable trainees, and had centuries of professional expertise to draw upon when the search was successful. See Mannix.
18. Lampadius, "Perhaps a sly anti-Christian joke" See Birley, pg. 306
19. He was christened with two new names as a result, Tractatilius (from the Latin *trahere* "to drag") and Tibennus
20. *op. cit.*, pg. 230
21. Plautianus was a wealthy protégé of the Emperor Caracalla. Martial wrote of the customs of his own day: "If you hear clapping of hands in the bathing hall, Flaccus, you may be sure some deformed person's enormous member is there." (IX, 34, translated in Forberg's *De Figuris Venenis*).
22. *Marquis de Sade: A Biography*, Maurice Lever, trans. Arthur Goldhammer. The passage continues: *Chocolate inspired an irresistible passion. He loved it in all its forms: in cream, in cakes, in ice cream, in bars: "I asked... for a cake with icing," he wrote to his wife, "but I want it to be chocolate and black inside from chocolate as the devil's arse is black from smoke. And the icing is to be the same." Madeleine awoke no memories in him but did make his mouth water.*
23. "...and one who was determined to indulge his taste to the uttermost." Michael Grant, *The Roman Emperors: A Biographical Guide to the Rulers of Imperial Rome, 31BC-AD476*, pg. 127
24. Ch. 3, pg. 49 of the 1988 Grafton paperback

There's an entertaining, open-minded, and even occasionally unsettling fictional account of Heliogabalus' rise and fall in Alfred Duggan's *Family Favourites*

Dr. ADDER YOUR TIME HAS COME

James Marriott

K.W. Jeter's science fiction novel, *Dr. Adder*, written in 1972, the work of a then college student, was not published until 1984. Almost as if Miller, Burroughs, Selby, et al, had never seen print, it was deemed until then 'too sick'. Sick it undoubtedly is, concerning as it does the adventures of a cosmetic surgeon who specialises in customising the genitalia of prostitutes according to their – or their partners' – deepest fantasies.

This may be a necessarily curt summary – the novel dealing with a number of other ideas and themes while climaxing in a cataclysmic battle between 'Good' and 'Evil' worthy of P.K. Dick's more wiggled religious fantasies – but the aforementioned ideas remain in the brain (for this reader at least) long after the rest of the novel has been lost in the smoky haze of memory.

The main reason why this book is especially significant today is its predictive quality – something arguably shared by all the best science fiction – extrapolating from present events into their imagined future developments. Indeed, Jeter's novel is in many ways 10 years the forerunner of the loose 'cyberpunk' school, which perhaps considers modern technological developments in a more vital way than any other recent science fiction.

Cosmetic surgery was already fairly advanced by the time of *Dr. Adder's* writing, but it was still very much a surgery of repair rather than one of 'improvement'. Today, not only is facial cosmetic

surgery absurdly popular, especially in the US where nosejobs have become standard 18th Birthday presents for rich girls not possessed of the *de rigueur* snout, but genital/sexual surgery has also taken off at an alarming rate in the last few years. Breast implants are the (relatively) socially acceptable side of this phenomenon, with transsexual surgery and penis enlargement surgery straying in the eyes of most into clearly deviant territory. It is interesting to note that nose and genital surgery can be performed by the NHS, as I was not a little surprised to discover recently: the first in some sorry newspaper 'scandal'; the second in an incredible three-part television programme concerning a 6-foot transsexual named Julie.

Where is this leading us? Breast implants and penis enlargement surgery certainly prey on people's insecurity, but at the same time demonstrate a further departure from the reign of the flesh, which is in many ways a good thing. The acceptance by medical authorities of the need for some individuals to undergo genital surgery, demonstrates a recognition of their psychological condition as in some way legitimate. Environment determines to a large extent the content of our psyche, especially its diseases/deviant patterns. If our environment is changing ever more rapidly, as there is good reason to believe, perhaps new neuroses shall soon spring up, appeasable only through bizarre surgical operations involving the moulding and sculpting of mucous membranes into delicate and ornate 'objet d'art'.

The increased popularity of facial cosmetic surgery as 'beauty treatment' may also lead to any number of peculiar developments: a resurgence in the 'natural' being popular, uglification surgery as popularised by Otto Sump. If none of this seems strange or untoward, just look at Michael Jackson (which has me wonder whether Jackson's extensive and outlandish facial surgery was an effort by some well-meaning but ill-advised surgeon to appease his alleged paedophile leanings...).

Equally as strange is the fact that many popular womens' magazines – *Vogue*, *Woman's Journal*, etc – have recently run articles on cosmetic surgery, many containing disturbing images (of eyelid tuck surgery, for instance), otherwise only to be found in medical text-books. Furthermore, concentrating almost exclusively on the cost-effectiveness of such operations rather than their implications and the reasons which drive people to having them. In a way, the magazines vindicate such a stance through the stress they lay on fashion and the importance of appearance; more than half their page count is taken up with health and beauty articles and related adverts.

It is easy to be dismissive of such exclusively beauty-related surgery, avoiding as it does the treatment of more fundamental problems within and



Result of nasal cancer.



Treatment involving fake glasses and plastic nose.

negating almost entirely the importance of peoples' characters. This is especially true when we realise that many of those who undergo cosmetic surgery are not remarkably unattractive anyway (though beauty does lie in the eye...). A recent interview in the October 94 issue of *Woman's Journal* features a woman who has spent over £30,000 on cosmetic surgery – a cost so high partly because of surgery going wrong or proving unsatisfactory: a 'conservative' facelift, for example, was followed by a more radical one, and her most gruesome tale, re. having a silicon breast removed, details how, 'I had it 'broken free' manually – the surgeon twists the breast sideways until it cracks, then does it anti-clockwise to break it up. It hurts like hell because

you're ripping scar tissue.' The principle reasons for her having so much surgery are: 'I wasn't born beautiful. I wasn't rich. I wasn't anything... I was never going to be asked out by the footballers and the sports jocks, the guys everyone wants to go out with.' A photo of her pre-surgery shows a young woman of hardly stunning looks, but better than plain and not at all ugly (if such an appraisal smacks of sizing up a piece of meat, it is justifiable if only because this is how she sees herself).

This kind of scenario is in some ways reminiscent of the on-going Prozac situation. A recent edition of *The Oprah Winfrey Show* sported a couple and child, all on Prozac. The daughter, now 15, grinning vacuously, told of how her family had been the

Facial disfigurement after excision of right orbit and upper jaw.



False eye and glasses make face look like new.

model of domestic bliss until she began to argue bitterly with her parents upon reaching puberty. Their answer to this particular development was to dose her up on Prozac, after which she returned to her former angelic form. Life's not perfect. Pop a pill. Have a nose job.

To return to *Dr. Adder*, one of the reasons I have always loved science fiction is that it always had the potential, if usually unrealised, to view current or past developments from an imagined future perspective which might be far different from how we view these developments today. If, for instance, Nazi experiments on Jewish prisoners during the Second World War had led to a cure for cancer, would future generations then view the Holocaust differently? Or more realistically, it is asinine to suppose that people in a few hundred years will not look back at some of the beliefs of our day with the same incredulity that we look back at those who believed the earth to be flat.

Dr. Adder is the hero of Jeter's novel for a number of reasons, not least because he offers people the potential to fulfil in reality their deepest fantasies and work through their neuroses, a Ballardian concept we might view even now as an important evolutionary development. We might well consider cosmetic surgery in general in much the same way – perhaps social historians in decades to come will see this period as an enormously important time during which man freed himself further from the fetters of nature, and be totally mystified as to why anyone saw it as an even remotely dangerous development.

Cosmetic surgery moreover offers virtually unlimited potential for individual expression, and if the current popularity of tattooing, body-piercing, etc. is anything to go by, we shouldn't have too long to wait before customised faces and body parts stray away from the Barbie doll fixations at present curtailing experimentation. It seems likely that cult surgeons with an immediately recognisable touch (*Dr. Adder*?) will eventually arise, in much the same way as famous tattoo artists and graffiti artists have. Just as these are now considered by many as legitimate, if marginalised art forms, cosmetic surgery should eventually come to be regarded in a similar way – personal styling for the well-off deviant.

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FROM FRANCE TO FLORIDA

raising hell with boiled angel artist

MIKE DIANA

David Kerekes

"A sort of puritanism in reverse." That's how Malcolm Muggeridge described the work of French cartoonist, Siné, in 1966. He could have been talking about the work of Mike Christopher Diana, a comic artist living in Florida in 1994.

Both have a keen sense of the grotesque, their styles minimal and distinctive. Except that perhaps Siné is dead now; he was born in 1928. Mike Diana is 24-years-old and, like most people living outside of France, not familiar with Siné or his work.

But there is a parallel.

Mike Diana was tried and convicted for publishing, advertising and distributing obscene material. He went to jail in March of 1994. While it is not thought that the French artist was ever prosecuted for any of his work, many of Siné's themes run concurrent

with those of Diana's; tackled and attacked in a similar way. This is in no way to insinuate plagiarism on the part of Diana (as far as this author is aware, Siné only ever received marginal publication in Britain, back in the late-Fifties and Sixties, and not at all in the States) but, rather, they share the same negative attitude toward clericalism and a preoccupation with, to quote Muggeridge again, "excretion and other such intimations of the flesh's infirmities." Meaning they draw heavily on images of physical disability and lower bodily functions.

Siné (real name: Maurice Sinet) is basically a traditional cartoon humorist: his single-panel cartoons tell a funny story, mainly a sight gag; on occasion courtesy of a caption. Always cutting, Siné became notorious for his digs at political figureheads, but his work in later years was much less satirical and more openly sexual. Indeed, his *Picture-book*, a work published in Holland in the last decade (no date is credited) consists entirely of outrageous – and 'distasteful' – hardcore sex cartoons. The volume brings to mind Aubrey Beardsley and the posthumous publication of his 'erotic' drawings for the *Lysistrata* – drawings which



Siné



Diana

the young artist, on his deathbed, requested be destroyed. *Picture-book* looks every bit the embittered and regretful cap to a life's work.

Diana, on the other hand, is working to the contrary. His early drawings are brash, ugly, often obscure insular panels. Now they are perceptive, structured and linear. This development can be seen over the course of Diana's own *Boiled Angel* magazine.

Like Siné, Diana uses no half-tones in his work. His latest comicbook endeavour, *Superfly*, shows the artist on a roll, utilising huge blocks of black ink and a delirious overuse of hatching. Very bold. Very



Cover for *Superfly* #1

positive. Less abundant in *Superfly* are the bent and twisted caricatures prevalent in *Boiled Angel* — those abstract figures whose genitals overshadow all other aspects of the anatomy, whose heads are bulbous and misshapen, lesions everywhere, and whose limbs exit from one part of the trunk to return, without reason, straight back into another part. These curious figures are so much over the top that they are comical. They're an explosion of the subconscious; so far removed from reality, so difficult to decipher, so estranged, that any immediacy the artist may have intended is drowned out. There is no real impact to these figures because they're just too kooky. (Of course, kooky is not the word Florida's Pinellas County Court would use.

Taken as a whole, they have ruled *Boiled Angel* numbers #7 and #8 obscene. This we shall come back to later.)

The most successful of Siné's works to be published in Britain remains the first: the 1958 volume, *Scatty* [pub: Max Reinhardt]. A collection of drawings and wordplay on the subject of cats, *Scatty* was reprinted several times over, reaching a ninth impression by 1963 (curiously for its day, this latter edition was a softback in a removable jacket). *Scatty* is the type of children's book more appreciated by adults. It is quaint and very slightly indicative of the artist's acerbic wit. It's popularity led publisher Reinhardt to commission another book, *Siné's Proverbs*, in which the artist interprets 85 popular English proverbs.

It isn't surprising that the British public should take to the above. However, it is a little ironic when one considers that in his homeland Siné's name was associated with more confrontational fare. When called to do military service, the artist spent eight out of the 12 months in prison, point-blank refusing to salute officers. In his twenties, his strongly anti-governmental cartoons were regular to *L'Express*, a left-wing weekly, until that paper published what he considered an offensively reactionary article. Then he quit to set to work producing his own one-man satirical review, *Siné-Massacre*. For this he is most famous.

Penguin Books collected many of the cartoons for publication in 1966 under the title, *Massacre*. Here the savagery of the cartoonist blisters through. So too the idiosyncrasy: a number of the 'jokes' are unfathomable. Quite often in his work, Siné looks for all intent and purposes to be hitting out at minority factions. Then again, the humour lies not in, say, the legless man himself or the fact he is about to hang himself, but in the situation being presented. The legless man can't reach the noose. How did he get the rope up there in the first place? Of course, there's more to it than that. Like the familiar characters of a TV sit-com, Siné's players have a unique flair; the way they look and their mannerism are instantly recognisable. That itself is enough to excite a response in the reader.

On flicking through *Massacre*, it isn't difficult to determine the key motifs in the artist's work. Cripples abound, as do crucifixes, death, and toilet bowls. Often than not, the cartoons are a combination of these elements: a quadruple amputee fastened to a cross with a single nail





through his chest, or a murderer drowning a priest in the font.

The use of the toilet bowl is pretty self-explanatory: society feeds on shit. The girl at the beach with a toilet bowl radio is listening to shit; the diner eagerly poised over a toilet bowl is about to eat shit. The use of the cripple is analogous to society itself, more to the point, working class society. The underdog. Death is the

theme occasionally required to meld these elements together.

In *Picture-book* [published by Uitgeverij de Harmonie (?), a company who produced a series of books by various artists in the same 100mm x 140mm format], Siné's command of his craft as artist has matured. There are very few blocks of ink and no unnecessary or wayward lines. Some of the bite has gone too, some of the 'point', lost to a proliferation of cunts and dicks. The majority of cartoons here seem just offensive for offensive sake. In one cartoon, a lecherous old man forces plastic dolls onto the head of his penis, the shattered dolls of previous attempts lying all around. In another, a girl pisses onto a cactus growing in the shape of an erect male member. In another, a legless man sporting an erection begs for the dominatrix to step within his reach. A man takes photographs of his knob and hangs them on his wall. And so on, the most arcane ideas the artist could prise from within himself. It

should have been quite difficult for Siné to create work beyond *Picture-book* and remain in control; retain an element of dark humour.

Mike Diana is learning to exercise control. His work has



appeared in the likes of *Brutarian*, *World War 3*, *Sewer Cunt*, and a host of other small press publications. But where once stood abberations, huge cocks the only clearly discernable appendage on a busy page, now Diana has carefully honed their chaos to create a resonant, exciting and quite beautiful tableau. *Superfly*, subtitled 'The Unholy Bible', is a visual treat. Published in 1993 by Michael Hunt Publications, *Superfly* is a standard format comicbook with stories by Diana. 'The Curse of the Lucky Stag Beetlehead' tells of how a boy on his way to school finds a Stag Beetlehead which grants him three wishes, one for each beetle tooth he pulls. Pulling the first tooth he gets a cadillac; his second wish is for a 'hot chick' to ride in his car. But he crashes the car, injures himself and kills the girl. He wants them both to be better again; he also wants \$20,000,000 cash. With one wish left, the boy decides to call for another lucky Stag Beetlehead. 'Shit, now my own head has turned into a giant Stag Beetlehead!' he cries upon the sudden, unexpected transformation. From his enormous insect head, the boy pulls out each of his three teeth, but none of the subsequent wishes come true and he bleeds to death.

In 'Suffer The Innocent', a story Mike did for *Brutarian*, the artist paints himself into the picture. It tells of how Diana is 'responsible for the moral breakdown of society' and is now 'the most hated man in Florida'. The opening panel has the figure of the artist crucified against the State of Florida, while a TV newscaster explains how he is 'going to jail for three years due to his issues #7 and #8 of *Boiled Angel*' 'Shit, I don't want to hurt anyone!' exclaims the persecuted one, 'I just want to draw!!' In the end a Jesus freak guns him down.

Boiled Angel is a digest-sized, photocopied and hand-stapled 'zine, featuring a combination of Diana's own artwork, other people's artwork, short stories, and news clippings. Over 100-pages per issue, here can be found Diana's explosive non-comic strip work; his penchant for drawing full-page ugly, turd pumping monsters. An exaggerated head peers from behind a shower curtain while disembodied limbs jut out from a toilet bowl. In another cartoon, a huge head rises from a toilet bowl to gawk at a suicide victim in the bathtub. A wolverine creature towers over the city, a limbless and headless female torso perched astride his ejaculating penis. A priest without legs has his member pushed up a little boy's anus and out his mouth. And so on.

Boiled Angel's circulation prior to Mike Diana's trial was almost 300 copies. Mike's introduction to the last issue to appear ran as follows:

YES! Boiled Angel is back!!! Here's #8, just in time for X-Mass! (Probably not.) Stuff this in your little child's stocking and then stuff your big, hard cock

up that tight little ass! Thanx to all you readers who bother to get this Rag of Sickness & Filth and keep looking for it! Also, I gotta thank Gomez Robespierre for the great cash donations he gave to help get this issue out. And thanx to many other wonderful, godly people for helping out with their cash donations! You couldn't have given to a more worthy cause! Also, many thanx to my pal Steve here in Florida who helped me fold pages, etc. and gave me lots of support. And I thank my wonderful girl friend from Colorado for being nice to me and caring so much!

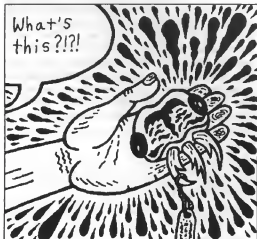
As well as aforementioned artwork, the contents of this *Boiled Angel* #8 include: 'Fucked-up Christmas Songs', alternate lyrics to well-known hymns; a prayer to Mike Diana; an interview with convicted killers, G.J. Schaefer (author of *Killer Fiction*) and Otis Toole (aka 'The Cannibal Kid'); one-time sidekick to Henry Lee Lucas; a pseudo-autobiographical-prose piece by Gomez Robespierre; photocopied snapshots of teenage auto-erotic fatalities; and snippets of sex-abuse attacks clipped from newspapers.

The issue previous concentrates more on children who have suffered sex abuse. Comic strips such as 'God Up My Ass', 'Kid Killers', 'Special Birth', 'Baby Fucked Dog Food', all display the child as victim of parents or of the Church. This issue also contains the extreme fiction of Schaefer, and 12 tips on 'How To Be A Successful Serial Killer' by a psychopath who wishes to remain anonymous (actually Full Force Frank, a psychopath).

With placard-wielding demonstrations outside the court, at his hearing of 20 April 1993, Mike C. Diana pleaded "Not Guilty" to the charges against him and issues #7 and #8 of *Boiled Angel*. These charges were: i) Publication of Lewd or Obscene Material, ii) Distribution of Lewd or Obscene Material, and iii) Advertising for the sale of Lewd or Obscene Material. Almost a year later, on Friday, 25 March 1994, Diana was convicted by a jury on all three counts

and held, over the weekend, without bail pending sentencing. The following Monday, Pinellas County Judge Waller Fullerton ordered that Diana be placed on probation for three years, that he pay \$3,000 in fines and costs, contribute over 1,200 hours of community service and undergo psychiatric counselling. What's more, Diana must take a "journalism ethics" course in order that he may become a "responsible" publisher; he must stay away from persons under 18-years-of-age; he must not publish any material that "could be considered obscene"; and, best of all, must not even create any material that could be considered obscene, "even for your own use." Diana's probation officer is granted warrantless searches of the artist's house should he feel there to be contravening squiggles on the premises.

In a report for *Creative Loafing* magazine, Chuck Shepherd, teaching law for 13 years, regarded the last order



The Curse of the Lucky Stag Beetlehead

M. Diana '96

as 'one of the most bizarre sentences since the First Amendment came of age in the 1920s'.

The trial of Mike Diana lasted for three days. The government's expert witness, a local psychologist by the name of Sydney Merin (or, 'Sid the Squid' as he's apparently known in Tampa Bay courthouses; a dead-cert to show if mental health is in question), analyzed the two issues of *Boiled Angel*. "Normal people," he said, "would find it worthless or disgusting." The images would appeal to the *deviant* personality. Every symbol, every ugly drawing, is the means by which killers are made.

For the Defence, another local psychiatrist, Arturo Gonzalez, argued that the drawings are "so gross" that even deviant groups turn away from them. Deviants prefer photos and video because of the "more defined shapes and forms".

According to prosecutor District Attorney Stuart Baggish, however, it all means the same thing anyway. It's a natural progression for the deviant to go from drawings through to photographs, through to film and, finally, through to reality.

Novelist Stirling Watson, not a good choice for the prosecution, called Diana a "very talented illustrator." That his work was "exuberant", "fascinating" and comparable to that of surrealist painter, Edvard Munch. "He's pushing the boundaries of a new medium," he said.

Seth Friedman, publisher of the listings magazine *Factsheet 5*, and Peter Kruper, leading New York illustrator, were also on the defence, explaining to



Cover art Boiled Angel #7

the court a little about the small press medium.

The prosecution won the case, convincing the three-man, three-woman jury that Diana *did* intend his publications for a deviant community. Their 'evidence'? That Diana, in the *Boiled Angel* editorials, occasionally addresses the reader as 'you sick fucks', thanking them for 'making this satanic filth possible'. Prior to his trial, but hardly unrelated in the eyes of the media, Mike Diana was a suspect in the Gainesville co-ed murder case. This on the strength of *Boiled Angel* #6, the *Satanic Sex* issue. In 1990, five college students were discovered dead, their bodies hacked and slashed and deliberately positioned for greater shock value. The manhunt lasted two years. Things got so far as the FBI wanting Diana to take a blood test. Local TV news broadcasts ran stories of the murders alongside the artist's trouble with *Boiled Angel*. However, the reports concentrated not on the fact that the artist was being charged with obscenity, but rather that he was a suspect in the murder investigation. This they did even after he had been cleared of the homicides. One news reporter badgered Diana on whether he drew what he did because he fantasized about it and whether he really wanted to do the things he depicted. Giving them his answer, the news reporter concluded, not objectively, "Mike



Cover art Boiled Angel #6



Cover art Boiled Angel #Ate

Diana says his comicbook is art, but we think it's smut."

"Good Entertainment!" That's how Mike Diana defined *Boiled Angel* to *Headpress*.

Speaking of his influences, his work, and of his trial and tribulations, this is what the artist had to say.

"I was first influenced by the E.C. horror comics of the 1950s, the reprints that is. At age 15, I started to read the underground comics. My favourites were Rory Hayes, S. Clay Wilson, and Greg Irons. I like Roy Tompkins' art now."

Have you seen Michael Newton's book, *Raising Hell: An A-Z of the Occult/Satanic Underground?* [pub: Avon Books, 1993] He has an entry on *Boiled Angel* in there, sandwiched between *BLOOD RITUALS* and *BAKEL*, SYLVIA.

"I have a copy of that book. I think it's pretty cool that *Boiled Angel* got listed in it, even though I don't think of *Boiled Angel* as satanic – it's more anti-God and anti-religion than satan worshipping."

Newton states that 'it is the strong "religious" slant that sets *Boiled Angel* apart from the septic

mainstream of sadomasochistic pornography.' What utter twaddle.

"I think he just wanted to sell a book about how rampant satanism is. It looks good to have a little 'zine like mine coming out of Florida, a State that has so many churches. In Florida there's a church on every cock-sucking corner. A lot of money being made."

Florida also has two organisations dedicated to the location of missing children. Has either organisation been in touch since you attained such a prominent media profile?

"I was never contacted by anyone except the assistant prosecuting attorney, Stuart Baggish. Baggish is the asshole that started all this shit. The state attorney's office had copies of *Boiled Angel* #7 and #8 lying around for two years before Baggish saw them and got offended."

But agents approached you as early as 1990, didn't they?

"That was with *Boiled Angel* #6. I did that issue right



Artwork from Boiled Angel #Ate

after the five students got murdered in Gainesville. The cops didn't have a suspect yet and there was talk about it being the ghost of Ted Bundy. Bundy died about a year before in the electric chair. The pigs came after me because I drew a guy on the cover of *Boiled Angel* #6 with a big hard-on, cutting open a girl and pulling out a fetus. The pigs told me to stop printing such filth... Fuck the pigs!"

The media weren't overly sympathetic either.

"No. The TV news showed footage of the students that the Gainesville killer had murdered, like, wheeling out the dead bodies. That kind of thing. That was the first thing people saw on the news and then they would start talking about me and my 'murder art'!"

When did the cops figure you weren't the co-ed murderer?

"I really don't think they ever thought I was. The pigs had a lot of pressure on them to find a killer, so they fucked with me and anyone else they could find. I read in the newspaper that they had, like, 10,000 suspects at one point... But issue #6 also got me fired from my janitor's job. I was working for the school board and I would use their

Xerox machines to make copies of *Boiled Angel*. One day, the cover to #6 got stuck in a machine and I couldn't get it out. Wrapped itself up in there. At the same time, someone stole \$10,000 worth of computer equipment from a school storage building and they tried to blame that on me. So I got fired."

What about the sentencing in the trial for issues #7 and #8? The recommendation that you attend a 'journalism ethics' course is pretty bizarre given the state of most journalism.

"I never started that course. The 'Comic Book Legal Defence Fund' paid a \$3,000 bond that got me off probation until the outcome of the appeal. My attorney argued that Stuart Baggish was guilty of prosecutorial misconduct in the trial, because of him telling the jury that *Boiled Angel* was the kind of material to appeal to serial killers like Danny Rolling – the guy who was finally convicted for the Gainesville murders. As for having to stay away from minors, that was all bullshit. I've never had or done anything that would make the court think I

would harm children."

It would be difficult to stay 200-yards away from a minor who came into the store where you work!

"I'm supposed to stay behind the counter in that instance. The court is full of fuckin' shit. It really hasn't gotten in the way of my everyday life. Most people I run into in public wish me luck and agree that the State is full of shit, and that I have a right to publish and draw no matter what it is."

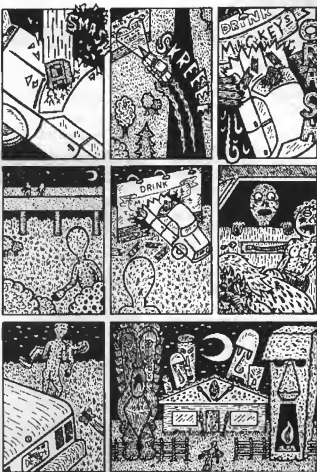
But what about having a probation officer who might come in and check on your drawings?!

"I don't give a fuck about those bastards. I draw what I want,

anyway! I started drawing soon as I got out of jail. My house hasn't been searched yet. I don't think I'm a high priority on their list... but it did leave me paranoid about drawing in my own home for a while. I would be drawing and jump at any little noise!"

How long were you in jail for?

"Four days. First two days I was in maximum security, with all the rapists and murderers. But no one



Tiki Gardens

messed with me, they all thought it was pretty fucked-up that I should be in jail for drawing. A lot of guys recognised me from the TV news... Community Service sucked. I hate working for free."

How does this experience affect your work now?

"It hasn't had any affect on the subject matter I choose to tackle. I'm tending to do a lot of painting now as opposed to pen and ink work, but they are just as 'obscene' as anything else I've done! One good thing that came out of my prosecution is that I met Suzy Smith. She had her own cable show and got thrown off the air after she showed video footage of G.G. Allin taking a shit on stage. We met and hit it off real good. She gave me a lot of support and was there in court with me and talked to me everyday I was in jail. She's a nude dancer in Tampa. She was voted 'Best Nude Dancer in Tampa Bay'. We plan to get married sometime soon and hopefully move out of Florida."

As of writing, Mike Diana is at work on *Superfly #2*. His comics reach a greater audience than they did before. Diana's publishers, Michael Hunt, have reprinted *Boiled Angels* #7 and #8, each with a special dedication on the inside front cover. The message reads: 'This reprint is dedicated to Stuart Baggish and the State of Florida for redefining the First Amendment. PS. FUCK CHRIST!' Siné would be proud.



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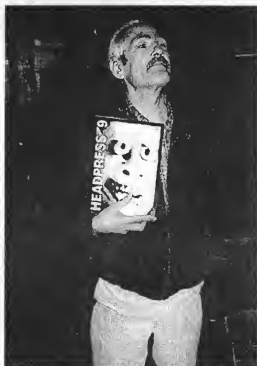


Photo: Justin Davis

PEOPLE WHO READ HEADPRESS #1
Moroccan reader proudly showing off his latest literary acquisition as he leaves Harrington's Irish bar on Larkin St. San Francisco. Note the rest of the bar is empty.

Adventures for REAL men: The lascivious rise and squalid fall of Men's Action Magazines

Andrew Darlington

They were waiting behind the door.

There was an arcade which had a high elaborate Victorian glass roof, and which led from Whitefriargate to the crowded outdoor market. Halfway through the arcade there was an electrical shop that sold second-hand TV's, radios, and dusty used speakers. It also has a trestle-table outside laden with boxes of old 45 rpm records. I'd browse for long moments, choosing my time, before thieving an Eddie Cochran, Elvis Presley or Marty Wilde single into my jacket and disappearing into the Market throng fast enough to be fast, but not so fast it attracted attention. I formed the core of my Rock 'n' Roll collection that way.

On other occasions I'd pass the electrical store to the next shop down the arcade, which sold books and magazines. The window display was like a garish collage of Detective Monthly's, Space Comics and Pulp Paperbacks, colour-faded by the sun. But inside, behind the door that opened inwards – so that customers at first couldn't find them unless they were regulars, or were specifically directed there – were the Men's Action Magazines. It always

seemed dingy inside, smelling of tactile dry decay and pent-up claustrophobia. The large format imported American magazines had names like *True Action*, *Man's Conquest*, *Man's Illustrated*, or *Adventures For Men*, and they were slotted in tiers into a mesh rack that drew my attention as inexorably as Earth's gravity sucks meteorites to fiery deaths in the stratosphere. Here was the core of another collection. Stocking my fervid adolescent mind with a library of charged erotic images, that are just as sharp, just as real now as when I slid each issue from the rack with trembling fingers, dry throat, and a crawling in my pants like a tarantula was loose in there.

Those magazines are gone now. They were already terminally mutating back then, although I didn't realise it at the time. And by the mid to late 1970s they'd be finally extinct. It's only now, when they crop up at Book and Collectors Fairs with hideously inflated prices, and Dealers compare their condition and dates of issue like they do with their First Editions and Works of Literature, that I remember the lurid artwork, the tuggish stories, and the teenage erections they inspired. Although they were always placed on 'restricted display', their vividly teasing covers – promising pulse-quickenning excitements to be found at the turn of a page – were difficult to miss. Particularly to a teenager troubled by permanent arousal burning a hole in his trousers.

The glossy colour covers most frequently tantalise with visions of huge lantern-jawed GI's built like Captain America rescuing ravaged and ravishing near-nude nubile suspended in manacles from dungeon walls by deviant Nazis or despicably racially caricatured Japanese. He is tough, fast and muscle-bound. She is a pneumatic blonde heroine in torn blouse which barely conceals breasts of breathtaking generosity. *Men's Saga* or *World Of Men* are cover-blurred LOVE-KING OF AMAZON ISLAND, MY LIFE WITH THE WORLD'S HOTTEST LOVE-DOLLS or NEVER BEFORE REVEALED: I WAS A LOVE CAPTIVE IN CASTRO'S SQUAD. All politically incorrect, but this is a time of

more naïve, less well-informed smut, long before such terms were thought of. Open the magazines with eagerly sweaty fingers. The first 12 pages also consist of art-spreads – monochrome, cheaper non-gloss paper, but just as lush, with a paragraph or two of introductory text which was continued elsewhere in the issue. Hence the front half of each issue was all lure, and the rest was solid prose continuations. And WHAT PROSE...



Chateau Fontainebleau is a stronghold of the Gestapo, holding a valuable Allied prisoner. The All-American hero is a leathery Marine Sergeant with a name like Brett or Clint. He gargles with barbed-wire and drinks neat gasoline. He has enough shrapnel in his body to trigger airport metal detectors. In a movie he could be played by a young John Wayne or Robert Mitchum. He contacts the local French Resistance group. They tell him that the only people allowed free access to the Chateau are the Saturday-night whores driven in from Paris. So Brett, or Clint, and two of the resistance girls – one of whom is the daughter of the SS-murdered group leader, empowered by a love of US-style democracy and a visceral loathing of Fascism – wait at the roadside for the black staff-car from Paris. Then, forced by his sten-gun, the car halts, the driver is killed and Brett assumes his uniform while the whores are hauled out of the car and out of their clothes so a further exchange can take place. Here I linger over the description as

whores undress with lavish glimpses of creamily soft thigh and flesh-pale breasts, and loyal resistance girls are transformed into painted harlotry. Leaving les confused girls shivering sans clothes in the wood, the car enters Chateau Fontainebleau unchallenged. Here the deviant sex mounts as heroically selfless girls voluntarily surrender their innocence and succumb to lustful Nazi perversity to cover Brett's furtive quest to liberate their prisoner. Rough hands sliding up French-girls' legs towards unprotected thighs... until, with Brett's mission complete, they wreak a bloody vengeance on their by-now drained oppressors.

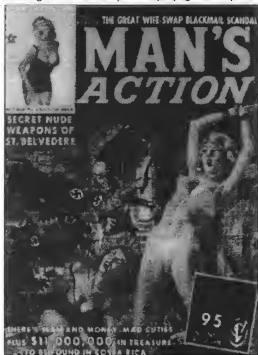
Descriptions are lascivious, although not necessarily automatically specific. Clothes are ripped from ripe bodies. Vile hands molest female flesh and heap all manner of imagined indignities on them, but they remain largely imagined. Male virility might surge up against female nakedness as they kiss, and as she claws at his back with her fingernails. She can suffer torment that no woman should ever endure. But the exact details, and the climax, are veiled. And that's enough. The mere prospect, the hints and innuendoes are sufficient to have my hard-on quivering on the brink.

The plot-lines are many and various. But the ingredients are often interchangeable. This time the mighty GI is penetrating the fascist stronghold Castello Sforza with the aid of a tempestuous Italian girl of easy virtue. I forget the details, but it is very hot and they have to crawl the length of a low access-shaft. She – Sophia let's call her – shucks off her outer clothes the better to facilitate her ease of passage. He follows her, crawling on hands and knees. He can see her large breasts heave and shudder with exertion, glistening sweat-moist in the heat. And he can't resist reaching out, sliding his hand over her pertly rounded bottom, his fingers straying just beneath the clinging material of her brief panties (they were always 'brief panties'). But Sophia turns on him angrily, "I might be a slut, but I'm not YOUR slut!" I loved that put-down. In fact, I loved it so much I've used it myself in my own subsequent fiction. And of course, after their various adventures in the Castello, she lowers her defences and her brief panties to welcome his penetration of HER access shaft. No mere foreigner can resist the All-American GI for too long.

Men, particularly American men, are gun-toting macho heroes in gut-jarring gungho proto-Rambo escapades. Women, sluts and whores, are fiery, desirable – and there to be rescued from bondage, flagellation, appalling and usually sexual horrors. Thanking their rescuers in the only way that their inflamed desires demand. But while sex is implied, violence is often sadistically extreme and graphic enough to churn the stomach. Torture scenes feature regularly. A Nazi collaborator is tied to a chair in an attempt to extract information from him about secret

V1 rocket-launch schedules aimed at Washington. He's force-fed water through a hose-pipe rammed deep into his throat. He splutters and gurgles, but when he refuses to divulge what they want to know they try heavily salted water. He gags and retches, but stays schtum. Until they use boiling water. This pornography of violence is the real unsettling element of the genre.

But there's more than just World War II. The Fifties and Sixties are Cold War territory, and the bad guys can also be Soviets, Cubans, or Koreans. I can't recall any Vietnamese, but I could be wrong. Commie-baiting is almost as much fun as Nazi-bashing. And there are pseudo-propaganda exposés



of beautiful young Russian women factory workers falling behind on impossibly gruelling quotas, and being forced to make up the deficit to their Card-Carrying Party Bosses in the form of sexual favours. The evil Comrade's hand feeling its brutal way into the warm confides of her bodice as she winces and bites her lip in an attempt to conceal her disgust. Then there are mock-historical 'articles' too, including an intimate investigation of Wild West brothels. The piece of tawdry cod-academia invites the eagerly salivating reader beyond the bat-wing doors of the 'House of the Rising Sun', and into the boudoir itself. And how I pored over the details of grizzled stumblebum trailhands lurching drunkenly into the bordellos, and the sound of moans, whimpers, heavy breathing, and furiously creaking bedsprings that resulted. The girls are often virtual prisoners of gruelling demanding Madames, and when they fail

to reach the required cash-copulatory standard they are spreadeagled naked and beaten until they improve the frequency of their performance... and what an image THAT provided!

Even the Europe of the Middle Ages provides fertile sleaze scenarios. An 'article' on the Droit de Seigneur, in which the local Aristocrat has the legal right to take each maiden's virginity on her wedding night drips with emotive descriptions of shyly innocent peasant lovelies stripped and ravished by obscenely slaving old lechers in cold and draughty castles. And while she's forced to do all manner of unspeakable things to satisfy his deviant lusts, what those things are is left to the imagination. But ignited by such a fuel, imaginings aren't in short supply. In retrospect I can see that all this crudity should have been hideously damaging to my pubertally vulnerable psyche. It should have wrecked my head. That it obviously didn't tends to undermine the argument of those who urge stricter censorial control on the more sophisticated media that have emerged since. My sexual and social development continued unimpaired by the vile and squalid horrors of such pulp monstrosities. I've always been an advocate of consensual fraternisation, and even then I found the intrusion of torture scenes confusing rather than arousing. It seemed to me that there are far more interesting things to do with compliant bodies than chain them to a dungeon wall and beat them.

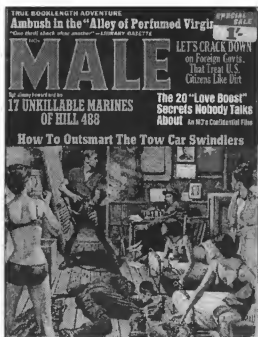
I'm no historian of trash culture. I don't pretend to know where the genre of Men's Action Magazines came from. That's not the story I'm telling. But I suspect they grew from the explosion of story-magazines that occurred between the wars. Voracious fly-by-night publishers catered for every taste, from pulp SF, to Crime Detection, Weird Tales, Ranch Westerns, Air-Ace Adventures – and Men's Action stories. They were initially two-fisted tales of Arctic Explorers, Jungle Trail-Blazers, the Indiana Jones and James Bonds of their day. *Man's Conquest* (July 1959) emerged the same year and month as the groundbreaking *Naked Lunch* by William Burroughs, which was published by the Paris Olympia Press. Bobby Darin's 'Dream Lover' was no.1 on the Pop Charts. And in a desperate shot for receding literary credibility, the issue proudly features a previously unpublished Jack London story, 'The Strange Challenge of Big-Girl Island'. But combines it with the raw sexploitation of 'The She-Devil of Rancho Grande'.

Usually such prose went without a by-line. And it's not impossible that such discrete anonymity protects the reputations of some legit writers. Hacks are poorly paid – then, as now. The only way you can type out a living is to be awe-inspiringly prolific, and interdisciplinary. Authors famous for their Westerns also wrote Horror, and churned out Detective fiction on the side too. The markets overlap. It's fascinating to conjecture who could

plausibly be churning out texts for that increasingly explicit flood of magazines which became more extreme and vicious by a process of natural newstand selection, and by GI demand during the war years. A small step for a man – a giant leap forward for REAL Man's Adventures.

As a kid in a late-Sixties Northern town, such thoughts were of little consequence. The magazines arrived in no particular order. Like their SF counterparts they seem to have been shipped in as ballast, off-loaded in Liverpool or Bristol in job-lots, and distributed with no real regard for the dates marked up on the spine, or the correct sequence of editions. Not that it mattered. They usually cost 50 or 60 cents, stickered 1s/6d, and they were self-contained. Issue, date and number were as much a fantasy as the tales they contained. I bought them in an embarrassed lunge of coins, and smuggled them home furtively for forbidden private indulgence. That they were bad and hopelessly morally unsound goes without saying. That, too, was a matter of little consequence to me even if I were capable of applying such a critique. I devoured them whole, from those mighty GI covers in steaming jungles under bleeding-red explosion-wracked skies, to the solid panels of bizarre box-numbered advertisements that became a more dense infestation the closer you got to the last page.

Adverts for the INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL ('I was STUCK. A wife and three kiddies – and the same old pay envelope. I couldn't see a



thing ahead except the same old grind. Then one day I read the ICS ad...). TRAIN FOR RADIO IN 12 WEEKS: BY ACTUAL SHOP WORK ON REAL EQUIPMENT ('I'll train you at home in your spare time for a good radio job...'), the ad illustrated with an uplifting little comic strip – 'Oh Bill, it's wonderful you've gone ahead so fast in radio', and a free booklet for PROSTATE SUFFERERS by Dr WD Smith: Inventor ('an enlarged, inflamed or faulty prostate gland very often causes Lameback, Frequent Night Rising, Leg Pains, Pelvic Pains, Lost Vigour...'), leaving aside the dubious double entendre of 'night risings', Dr Smith offers his 'invention' which 'enables any man to massage his prostate gland in the privacy of his home. It often brings relief'. There's a \$1 baldness cure, a book of PLAIN FACTS FOR PILES SUFFERERS, GET-A-JOB IN SCIENTIFIC CRIME DETECTION, a \$1 pimple formula, START A POTATO CHIP BUSINESS, and 'stimulate virile strength by using Zo-Ak Tablets, the formula created especially for men whose virile strength is temporarily reduced'. And 'False Teeth on 60 Days Trial'!

But when it all ended, I don't know where the Men's Action Magazines went to either. Certainly they were still there, though more difficult to find, into the mid-Seventies. Or perhaps it's just that I was no longer looking? Probably they lost their sales niche to the higher quality nudie colour-spreads, the more developed sensitivities and higher standards offered by the slimmer but more sophisticated glossy soft-porn that edged them out of the newsgagents. Deservedly so. They were trash. But that's not the story I'm telling either. I'm





celebrating the quiver of anticipation rifling through those tiers of garish magazines slotted into that mesh rack waiting behind the shop door in the arcade with a high Victorian glass roof. Celebrating each teenage arousal ravenous for experience that they stimulated.

And there was good – if curious – stuff within too. Beside the explicit True Crime spreads, the UFO visitations, the COMMIE SHE-DEVIL SHOCK SQUADS, THE MAFIA SEX-MURDERS, BITCHES OF DOMINATION DUNGEON, THE MOTORCYCLE GANG GIRLS, THE MAN-HUNGRY NYMPHO SUBURBAN HOUSEWIVES, THE SANATORIUM SEX-SLAVES, THE MARINE'S MASSACRE ORGY, and the coy poor-quality black-and-white pin-ups, I first read about the reefer-crazed Be-Bop-fuelled Beat Generation. Those outraged tales of promiscuous Beatnik weirdos and Dharma Burns in their seedy opium jazz cellars just might have prepared me psychologically for my discovery of Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg's high-octane books a few years later.

And there were appalling oddities such as the allegedly true story of a man born with the opening of his spermatic tube occurring not at the glans, but halfway down the shaft of his penis. This renders him supposedly incapable of impregnating a woman. On this somewhat shaky proviso, and in those pre-contraceptive pill days, he is thus able to indulge in unprotected sex without fear of the consequences. At least in terms of seeding progeny. His many eager partners are fascinated by his unique genital

deformity, women discuss him behind his back and recommend him to their friends. As a walking dildo, he enjoys his affliction to the full.

Then there's the story of one man and his camera. An ordinary Joe who just happens to enjoy American photographing women for his own personal collection. Often, as no touching is involved, and no sexual pressure applied, they can be persuaded to remove blouse and bra for such shots. Pro Polaroid, and well before 'Readers Wives', they respond to his slightly risqué flattery, more often than not, out of natural pride in the beauty of their bodies that the uptight early-Sixties morals forces them to repress. It's almost a liberalist theme in that sense, clear through to the girl he meets in the Appalachian Mountains. A beauty, intrigued and enthusiastic about his life's work, but strangely reluctant to strip herself for his artful lens. Until she tearfully confides to him that as a child her chest^s was accidentally scalded, and is disfigured by ugly scars. He drives her into the forest. She shyly reveals her marred charms, and he photographs her as she embraces a mighty American redwood in such a way that the unblemished side of her breast down to the pretty nipple is displayed, but the scarring is not. She's overwhelmingly grateful to him for providing her with the opportunity to overcome her unsightly handicap and become a major glamour model. If only for a day. And the supposed photo of the supposed girl hugging the alleged Appalachian tree trunk is there on the page. She looks beautiful.

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A VISIT TO THE CENTURY THEATER

Miles Wood

Despite being only five minutes walk away from my hotel I'd not come across the Century Theater, located, as it is, in the Tenderloin – clearly not an area to hang out in. On my first night in town I got hassled as I wandered down looking for a cab, and travelling through on a bus I spotted a fight. I noticed the Century late one night walking up to a local bar, and the name 'Keisha' on the marquee caught my eye. In the absence of an overly hectic San Francisco nightlife, I decided I should check it out at some point.

I finally got my act together on my last day there, and early in the evening made my way down to its Larkin location. All is quiet on the streets of San Francisco. Suddenly, a police car pulls out in front of a car stopped at a red light, a seemingly ordinary bloke on the sidewalk pulls a pistol from nowhere, a second police car screeches to a halt. Within seconds, the young driver (of what is presumably a stolen car) is cuffed at gunpoint and led away. Phew! Unfortunately, due to my intended destination, I'm without my camera and the event goes unrecorded.

Arriving at the Century, I check out the show times and discover Keisha will be on stage in about half-an-hour, which seems like pretty good timing. I hand over a pretty hefty \$17 (it's slightly cheaper earlier in the day and even more expensive later on) and enter, glancing at a book which details what girls are in the building at the time. I head for the main theater: a stage is at the far end with a walkway going some way into the audience. I take a seat on



Photo: Miles Wood

the third or forth row and within a couple of minutes a girl appears on stage and goes through a fairly routine, if enjoyable, striptease. It isn't long before I'm approached by one of the scantily clad (or topless) girls wandering around. "Mind if I come and sit with you?" she enquires. "No thanks," I blurt out. The offer is to do a lap dance, which involves the girl sitting on your lap and gyrating while your hands venture where they will (and where they're allowed). From observing the goings-on elsewhere in the theater, the girls seem to stop after a couple of minutes when you have to further fill their pockets. Not that I blame the girls, who likely are just trying to make an honest buck, but it seems it could be an expensive and ultimately unsatisfying (or maybe not!) experience. I pass up on the lap dancing seven or eight times (although after saying no to



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one girl and looking up to see fair approximation to Christina Applegate I could've been sorely tempted).

Seeking a break from these hassles, I decide to explore the rest of the place before Keisha's slightly delayed appearance. I make my way up the stairs to where the Playpen and Arena are located. With the name of the former sounding somewhat wild for this shy and retiring writer, I enter a booth to discover what the Arena might be. I'm confronted with two girls, on their knees, literally inches away from me on the other side of a one-way mirror... at least they tell me it's one-way. If I slip some bills under the glass they will perform. One holds a dildo up to the

partition as if my imagination *needs* stimulating. When I enquire how much, I'm told that would be against the law, and that I should just show them the money and they'd give me a "yes" or "no". Not exactly being flush, and feeling I could easily get stifled [Groan - Eds.], I half apologise and make my way back down to the theater.

Keisha's a fairly fleshy femme - and apparently has been criticised in the past for being too fat - but she must've been working out and trimmed down or something, because she looks pretty fit, giving a supple and sensuous performance. She's pretty classy, too, but like the preceding and subsequent acts, it's a striptease and nude dancing and that's your lot.

I pop up to Keisha's dressing room after the show and chat about England (she likes London a lot, although it's not exactly suited to her career choice) and Spain (she lived in Puerto Banus for a couple of years). After starting out in the porn film industry in 1985, Keisha switched to burlesque in 1990, before going back in front of the cameras a couple of years later. She signs a 10 x 8 for me. Someone tells me she's one of the most personable girls on the circuit, and that is certainly born out in the time I spend with her.

I am directed to the famed Mitchell Bros. theater around the corner (many of the girls work both establishments), but there is no sign of any star performers this evening. Besides, my time at the Century proves satisfying enough. At least for the time being.

THE BRAM STOKER SOCIETY

A Dublin-based group with an international membership of 100 enthusiasts, devoted to studying the author's works and his influence on cinema, theatre and music. Annual subscription (£6) covers a Journal (annual), Newsletter (quarterly) and invitations to meetings of The Bram Stoker Club at Trinity College, Dublin.

Contact: David Lass, Hon. Secretary, The Bram Stoker Club, Regent House, Trinity College, Dublin 2, Ireland.

The 5th International Bram Stoker Summer School will be held at St. Gabriel's Community Centre, Contarf, Dublin 3 from June 29th to July 2nd 1995.

Contact: Dennis McIntyre, Director, 42 Grange Park Grove, Raheny, Dublin 5, Ireland.
Tel: (from UK) 010 3531 8481298.

LANA SANDS FLESH ON FLESH

Anthony Petkovich

Lana Sands is a XXX actress and dancer. Her filmography includes the titles: *The Tempest*, *Bump-n-Grind*, *Sparkling Champagne*, *Rump Shaker 3*, *The Blues 2*, *The Reel World*, *Anal Vision Vol 7*, *Black Buttmán*, *Sex Fugitives*, *My Baby Got Back! 4*, *The Dragon Lady 5* and *6*, *The Sweet Sweet Back's Big Bone*, *Randy West's Up and Cummers 3*, *Smooth As Silk*, *The Anal Diary of Misty Rain*, and *Dog Walker*. In her most recent hardcore feature, she appears alongside John Wayne Bobbitt – focus of the world's media when castrated by his wife in 1993. Anthony Petkovich talked to both Lana and fellow starlet Cumisha Amado recently. His interview with the latter will appear next issue.

I love Lana Sands. Fuck it. I love the woman. Not only does she have the hardest body in porn – and a mouth-watering bubble butt, to boot – she also possesses an absolutely sparkling personality.

When I saw Lana in San Francisco, dancing with Cumisha Amado, I was bowled over. Cumisha strapped on a dildo and fucked Lana from behind. In between numbers, they were still at it. Slamming away. All the sleazoids in the club were unusually silent. Chests heaving. Jaws clenched. Brows sweating. Eyeballs extended. Hard-ons a-waggin'. Christ, you could hear your asshole twitch. And then Lana let out a groan. A deep, passionate groan – as if she were taking a hefty dump in the nearby girlsroom. That's when all hell broke loose. After

the show, patrons awkwardly stumbled out of the joint with their chins on their chests, nervously covering their nether regions on account of ripping themselves new zippers. What can I say? I love the woman. I love her! She's also one of the most approachable girls in the business – right up there with Cumisha. No bitchy airs. No cunt attitude. A girl you'd love to share a beer with over a quiet game of pool. And what an exotic-looking gal! Ethnic-wise, you really can't pin her down. As Lana, herself, admits, she fits all categories: Latin, Black, Asian. And all those firm, taut muscles give her luscious bronze body more ripples than a Ruffles potato chip. Finding a bit of fat on her is like trying to pinch a concrete wall. Lana's proof positive that porn needs more minorities. Let's add some spice to this side of vice. Lana Sands, fill our screens and do the smut world a great favour – stay with us for a long while.

Headpress I haven't seen the video you did with John Wayne Bobbitt, yet. What's his dick look like? – part black, part white, part Zebra?

Lana Sands It's like... um... you've seen Frankenstein with all the stitches and everything sewn on? It looked like Frankenstein's penis. *Ha ha ha*. When it's limp, it's normal looking. It looks like a... limp dick. But when it gets big, it's like... (shudders, speechless; but soon snaps out of it) well, you know, just looking at it, you could tell it used to be a really nice cock. It could have been something really beautiful. *Ha ha ha*. But half of it looks like air bubbles now. The part that's sewn on is pretty much useless. He only gets feeling at the bottom of the shaft, two inches... an inch and half... *ha ha ha*, maybe an inch at the bottom. So if you're giving him head, you've got to deep throat it so you can touch that part.

Headpress So was Bobbitt trying to prove that his tool still works?

Sands Um... you know, actually I think he needed some bail money. *Ha ha ha*. No, but he's saying, "yeah" he did do it to prove himself to the public. But if that was the case, he didn't do a very good job on my scene. *Ha ha ha*. There was me and

another blonde girl with him... They haven't figured out a title yet. They're thinking about a take-off from Howard Stern's book *Uncut Parts* or something.

Headpress So what are your impressions of San Francisco?

Sands Well, I've been to Haight Street. Shopping there is fun, but I haven't really gotten out of this dressing room at all. I have two down days, so Cumisha and I are gonna travel a bit. But San Francisco seems nice. The people are different than LA. LA is very 'in style'. I don't like that attitude, that wall. Here, I notice a lot of girls don't really dress to impress at the clubs. Which is nice. Most of the people who have nice cars in LA are getting them repped. They have no money. I went out with a guy who had a Porsche, and he asked me if I would give him 10 bucks for dinner and a pack of cigarettes. It's like... come on...

Headpress Your scene in *Dog Walker* with Joey Silvera and that French wench is a real scorcher.

Sands Oh yeah. She didn't speak any English, either. She didn't speak any. She had to have a translator. And the only thing she could say to me was "Oui". Ha ha ha. So everyone was saying to me, "Tell her you're gonna stick your fist up her ass" ha ha ha, because she would probably say "Oui". Ha ha ha. I was so excited to work with her. I picked her out myself, you know. I thought she was really, really pretty. Early on she said she liked girls, so I said, "Perfect. We're going to have a great time. Joey's going to probably end up watching us because we're going to have so much fun." And, when we did the scene, I put on the strap-on, ready to fuck her, I was really excited about fucking her. (aside) I'm a dominant. But, come to find out, she'll let you lick out her pussy, but she won't do anything to another girl. And she won't get fucked by a girl. That's why I didn't... I didn't know what to do with the strap-on. I had a dick, and it was all up and ready to go, but she wasn't on. And Joey, ha ha ha, Joey didn't want it. Ha ha ha, I asked him.

I had to fuck somebody, but nobody wanted to fuck me. I've seen Dick Nasty take it. And I've seen Tommy Byron do it. Actually, I did the lighting for Tommy and Sarah Jane Hamilton in a film. I asked to fuck him but she beat me to him. But I held the lights for them, just so I could be there, right over them, watching.

But back to *Dog Walker*, yeah, John Leslie's a really good friend of mine. I've done quite a few things for him.

Headpress What about your first sexual experience?

Sands I was raped when I was 15 by my lifeguard.



I was really, really innocent, and I'd never had alcohol before. He invited me over to a party. I brought my girlfriend with me, and there was another guy there. I drank and I was feelin' really good. So I kept drinking. And he really took advantage of me.

Headpress Did any good sexual experiences follow shortly after that one?

Sands (Thinking) Um... good experience... well, after that, it made me start thinking that sex didn't mean anything, that it was very impersonal. And it was easy for me to... I guess I became a slut. You know, I just had sex just to do it – not to enjoy it, just to do it. And I never had any feeling behind it for a long time. Never. I hated guys for a long time. I hated myself for a long

time for letting it happen. And I guess I did anything to hurt myself even more. Just to punish myself.

Headpress Do you feel that has a lot to do with the fact that you're a dominant now?

Sands Yes. And a big fetish of mine is fucking guys with a strap-on dildo. I enjoy that, but I think in the back of my mind it might be to have full control, so nothing like that will ever happen again. I have the control, and I will not let go of it.

Headpress So it's kind of therapeutic for you?

Sands Yeah. And you know sometimes it's very difficult for me to come. I'm really the only one who can make me come because I'm scared to let go. I can't let go and really enjoy it. It's very difficult for me to trust somebody else.

Headpress What did you do after graduating from high school?

Sands I went to Golden West College in Huntington Beach for two years. I was going to major in math, but I really wasn't sure. I'd been tutoring math ever since sixth grade.

Headpress Obviously you're good with numbers.

Sands Yeah. My dad's a mathematician.

Cumisha Amado She's great at playing pool, too! She knows the angles. She's a *shark* on pool.

Sands Ha ha ha.

Amado She's a *shark*! Oh God. She embarrassed those guys, those preppy guys at the club we were at the other night. They were betting for money and she won.

Sands I won 200 bucks one time because... you see, the first game you play with someone, you have to kind of win, but you just... *barely* win, you know. You don't make really fantastic shots. And that first game you bet for like \$20, \$30 or something. Just enough to get by, to make it look lucky. And then, when you bet a lot of money, you blow 'em out of the water. Ha ha ha. You kinda gotta bait them. And then they think, "Aw, she was just a lucky bitch. She ain't gonna win this time."

Amado She sunk the last four balls into the pockets.

Sands Ha ha ha.

Headpress What about some of your hobbies?

Sands I scuba dive. I was certified. I've been doing that for quite a while. I love to swim, love water sports. I jet ski. Um... I also sing.

Headpress What type of music?

Sands Stuff like Sarah Brightman. She's got a beautiful voice. I also like singing stuff like The Cranberries. Is that alternative rock? Alternative rock, yeah.

Headpress Are you thinking about pursuing that?

Sands God, you know, I have stage fright. In the



Lana Sands photo © Anthony Petkovich

bathroom or at home, I sing great. Or I could sing to you now, and I could sing great. But put me on a stage...

Headpress I'd love to hear you.

Sands Ha ha ha.

Headpress But I don't want to put you on the spot. You don't have to.

Sands *Ha ha ha.*

Headpress What about singing into mikes? How do you feel about oral sex?

Sands I'm into really safe sex. And, you know, just having that... I mean, I love giving head, but...

Headpress There's the possibility that you'll swallow even the smallest amount of seed...

Sands Yeah. So, you know, usually I have to put this condom on it, and then I don't enjoy it. But, God, one night I gave this guy head for three hours – at least! And I could not -stop -sucking!

Headpress You must have come close to killing the guy.

Sands I almost did. *Ha ha ha.* He kept pushing me away. I climbed on top of him, and he kept pushing me off him, and I pinned him down and I kept fucking and fucking and fucking. He came twice in my body. It was so undulating. And it was so... I needed *more*. He told me to go to sleep and I was staring at him all night because he went to sleep on me. And he was an ugly guy, too. Whoa! Cumisha had two good-looking guys with her, and I wanted one of them, and I went home with the real ugly guy. I swear to God, he looked good, but in the middle of the night when I was staring at him, I was going, "Oh my God, he's fuckin' ugly. But I gotta fuck him again." (giggles) And I was just watching him and I was so horny and I just started blowing him in the middle of the night and he came again. And I tried to climb on top of him, but he pushed me off and it was like (disappointed)... man... he kind of ruined my trip.

Headpress But you don't always work with condoms in your films.

Sands In the movies, you can't. I take my chances in the movies. *But*, I stay with the same guys. I'm really selective on the guys.

Amado Everybody's tested every three months, Lana.

Sands But, you know, that's not foolproof. We all take chances. Nobody talks about it, but, you know, it's scary just thinking about it. I mean, with the AIDS test... it's not 100 percent...

Headpress There's such a large grey area.

Sands Yeah.

Amado Regular porn, they don't use condoms. But, if you do a bi movie or a gay movie, they *always* wear condoms. *All* the time. That's what Jim South and Reb don't understand because they're always degrading girls that do bi movies and gay movies. They think that we're going to catch AIDS. I've done bi movies and gay movies. They always use condoms. Regular porn movies, they don't use condoms.

Headpress Quite honestly, I don't like seeing condoms in movies. It just ruins the nastiness.

Sands Yeah. That's why they don't use condoms in the movies. You know, I love watching flesh on flesh. I don't really get into the condom thing, either. I don't have a lot of sex in my private life just because it doesn't do anything for me to see a condom on a dick. So I would rather masturbate, *thinking* about fucking someone without a condom. That's my sex life. *Ha ha ha.* That's about as safe as it gets.

Headpress So how do you feel about anal sex?

Sands I like anal sex. I enjoy it.

Headpress What about girl-girl?

photo © Anthony Petkovich



Sands In my private life I do like women. I like girls that are non-whites... a... something mix. I find a lot in this business that girls kinda say that they like it, but don't really like it. It's very difficult for me to have sex with someone who doesn't like it and is only thinking about the money, you know? I can't really work with those kind of people. I save it for my private life – I don't do a lot of girl-girl.

Headpress Looking at your figure, it's obvious that you really work out.

Sands Yeah. I weight-lift. (stands up, displaying her body)

Headpress Look at that. My God. You can't pinch anything there.

Sands I just did my shoulders today. I work out a lot. After I get off the porno set, I'm right at the gym. So, I don't really have time for anything. But I have time to call Cumisha. (giggles)

Headpress How many hours a day do you work out?

Sands Oh, I work out twice a day but. I only work out about an hour to an hour and a half. You don't need that much of a workout with weights. People who stay at the gym for two or three hours are just wasting their time. They don't know what they're doing. I mean, if you know what you're doing, you super set and get the hell outta there. Of course, a big part of it is diet. Definitely. And if I eat something really bad – which doesn't normally happen, but if I do – I bust my ass. I eat very little sugar. I eat no fried foods. I stay away from saturated fats, anything with a lot of sugar in it. Like on my period, I eat a lot of sugar. You know, I can't help that... I just need the chocolate. But I work out *hard* to get rid of that. I mean, right after I eat it, I can *feel* the fat just coming on, right after it goes down my throat.

Headpress How did you originally get involved in X?

Sands I was stripping a long time ago for a bachelor company here in California. I was going to school full time, and I was cleaning boats early in the morning – as an underwater hull cleaner. I did the stripping because being in a wet suit for eight hours made me feel really ugly. You know, I was just another guy. The bachelor parties were my way of being a woman, of being sexy. And I started getting into escort. But the men I dated were really old, and I started feeling really old and unattractive. During that same time, my relationship was going downhill and... well, I was just feeling really ugly. Anyhow, I was watching a lot of porno and it was like, "Wow! I

can have sex with really good-looking guys and get paid for it. And I could have sex with beautiful girls... it would be like being in heaven. That would be the ultimate." I'd met Dominique Simone on Hermosa Beach and – I'm really into dark-skinned girls – I thought she was *beautiful*. I found out that she did pornos. And I was really shy. I never had sex with my escorts. Never. I was really young, inexperienced. I didn't do a lot.

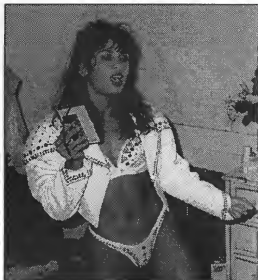


photo © Anthony Petkovich

Headpress Well, you're still very young, but obviously much more experienced.

Sands I know my shit now. *Ha ha ha*. Actually, I came into the business to find her.

Headpress Dominique?

Sands Um-hm. And, you know, I thought maybe we could go out and be pals. She was just so pretty. And then when I got into the business, it was really rough, because I was too nice and too innocent. I got taken advantage of a lot.

Headpress And you've been in the business for?...

Sands A year and a half.

Headpress In what way(s) were you taken advantage of?

Sands Pro-Amateurs – for very little money. Because the girls didn't talk about how much they made, because everyone has their own price. They said, "Charge whatever you want to charge." And I was like, "Well, I've never charged for sex." And I didn't know what the range was. You know, the Pro-

Amateurs said, "We'll pay you \$150 for sex and \$250 for anal sex." And they were hyping it up like that was a lot of money. So I go, "Maybe that is a lot of money. I don't know." And then I realized they were just ripping me off. The lower you price yourself, the more you work. If you price yourself high, you may get the money you're asking for, but you won't get work often. I'm not as worried about the money as I am about having fun. I don't price myself too low, and I don't price myself too high because I like the work. I like to be booked.

Headpress Do you act as your own agent, your own manager?

Sands Well, you know, I'm with Jim South. With him, doing his own producing, it's kind of like a conflict of interest because he's also an agent. As a producer, he tries to get talent for as cheap as he can, and he's starting to make a lot of movies. And he's got a lot of friends that work for him and, you know, they help him out. So he tries to get girls for as cheap as he can for his friends. Well, that's not an agent's job. An agent's job is to work for the girl and get her the most money. So, you see, he really doesn't do that. What he can do, if you lower your price, is get you a lot of work for his friends. I don't know. In a way, I'm happy because I am getting a lot of work. But, in a way, I'm upset because I'm worth a lot more, and he doesn't see it, and that makes me real angry. And it's because I don't have the plastic-ness, you know, I don't have the 'star look' with the puffed out hair, the blonde hair or the big titties. So I don't think he pushes me as much as he can. And a lot of people tell me, "Yeah, we look for dark-skinned girls, but Jim never says anything about you."

Headpress What's your nationality?

Sands I am half Thai and half Irish.

Headpress How do you feel about the position of minorities in porn?

Sands There are a lot of clubs that I can't get booked at in the midwest because they don't like to see interracial sex. The companies worry about where they can sell their stuff. Canada doesn't take interracial or black movies. They don't like to take chances. Me, I'm in a lot of movies. If you watch the movies, you'll see me in a lot of them because I'm not black and they put me in the interracial because I'm a crossover and I can slide by. I play a black role and they know I'm not black. But it gets by.

Headpress What's the hottest film you've done so far?

Sands I like *Dog Walker* a lot. I shot something for Ron Sullivan... I believe it was for Cabellero. I don't even know the name of it. But he shot something with a lot of... passion. The movie was really powerful. I'm into a good script; not actually the words, but more of the feeling. It was a really sexual movie.

Headpress What, if anything, would make you get out of the business?

Sands You know, I think about HIV all the time. I live in West Hollywood.

Amado They call it Boystown.

Sands So I live a gay lifestyle. And I'm surrounded by... I mean, it's real. You know, people in porno who live in Canoga Park or who live down South Hollywood... a lot of people don't see gayness. And they don't see people with HIV. I see people with HIV every day, and it can happen. I mean, I can dance, but I don't really enjoy being on stage. I'm more of a... I'm a people person. I like bachelor parties and I like escorting. I like to be there with them, talking to them. I don't like them watching me like I'm some kind of... side show. I just like to be there with them. I'll probably do bachelor parties and escorting for a long, long time. Going back to school. I just, you know, got a little side-tracked. I just needed a break from college. I was really stressed out. I wanted to get into the environment. I don't like computers and I don't like being in an office. I don't think I could ever do a 9 to 5 job. So, I'll probably do field work when I get a bit older.

Headpress Do you have a fan club?

Sands There's the Lana Sands Fan Club (giggles)... which is 16834 Algonquin Street, Suite 607, Huntington Beach, CA 92649, USA. And you can write. I love nasty letters. I get a ton of 'em and I love reading 'em. I do my own fan club because I like to know that I'm the one handling all of it. I don't like other people typing up memos for me. I like to do it for myself so I know what they're getting. And I do bachelor parties, so if anyone wants to write for a bachelor party... I can travel... and I do... yeah, bachelor parties, we'll just leave it at that.

Thanks to Shane Hunter & Cumisha Amado.

THE CAMPAIGN FOR DECENCY IN LITERATURE

Sarah Harris

In late May, 1994, the following letter appeared in the *Glasgow Evening Times*

Dear Sir,

I am writing in the hope that your readers may be interested in supporting an organization recently formed to campaign against gratuitous sex and violence in literature. It is our belief that the widespread attention paid to the presentation of these subjects on television and in the cinema and computer games is tending to distract attention from equally dangerous and damaging material available without age restriction in bookshops on every high street in the U.K. Activities and ideas that would be condemned by all right-thinking people on film and video seem to become immune from scrutiny or censure when presented in written form. A time in which the works of the "Marquis" de Sade are openly on public sale is surely a time at which determined action within the law is long overdue. Anyone interested in learning more or joining the campaign against the free availability of such literature is invited to write (enclosing a stamped addressed envelope if possible please) to:

Campaign for Decency in Literature,
Yours faithfully,
Sarah Harris (Secretary)

A week or so later, the same letter appeared in the *South Wales Echo*. A trickle of letters started to flow in to the Campaign address, asking for more information. The letter then appeared in the *Christian Herald*. The trickle became a flood. The Campaign for Decency in Literature was well and truly afloat. People writing to it enclosing an SAE were sent a newsletter that began as follows:

THE CAMPAIGN FOR DECENCY IN LITERATURE

NEWSLETTER 1: JUNE 1994

What is the Campaign for Decency in Literature?

The Campaign for Decency in Literature is exactly what it says it is: a campaign for decency, tolerance and civilized values in literature and against obscenity, insult and barbarism. It is independent of all religious and political groups: members themselves may be (and often are) devout religious believers or committed supporters of a political party, but the Campaign itself exists to reflect concerns that are not specific to any particular group. Obscene and immoral literature affects us all, and we should all be concerned by it. The steady growth of the false freedom of the debauched and prurient is exactly mirrored by the steady shrinkage of true freedom experienced by those suffering from ever-increasing crimes of violence, especially sexual violence. The Campaign for Decency in Literature and its supporters believe that the time has come to act.

What does the Campaign seek to do?

We seek to act as a clearing-house for information on and ways of fighting against immoral and obscene literature and we intend to produce regular newsletters to this end, of which this is the first. Any relevant information or suggestions will be gratefully received, though we regret it will not always be possible to thank or respond to correspondents unless they enclose an SAE.

How can I help?

You can help by joining in the process of education. Many people aren't aware that a problem exists where books and literature are concerned. Obscene videos and computer games are obviously dangerous: obscene books aren't. Books are unobtrusive and easy to conceal: no expensive equipment or specialized knowledge is needed to use them, and our legislators don't seem to recognise how very dangerous this makes them. Hence we have become a society in which, to give an example from the personal experience of one founding member of the C.D.L., a book by the Marquis de Sade was actually on the shelves of a local library, available to anyone with a library card - for free!

The newsletter then went to ask for help against "one of the worst examples of what the Campaign is fighting": a book called *Killing for Culture*, written by David Kerekes and David Slater of "Headpress Books PLC".

A colleague of Dave Kerekes informs him of the leaflet and he writes to the Campaign asking that any reference to Headpress be dropped.

The Campaign closes down.

The hoax is over.

Only hoax isn't really the word. The Campaign for Decency in Literature was originally started as a means of stirring up publicity for *Killing for Culture* and other books. Headpress didn't start it [nor did Annihilation Press, the publishers - Eds.], neither were they aware of its progress or methods to the necessary extent.

And in the end, it wasn't needed. *Killing for Culture* has sold extremely well, and did so without the Campaign's help.

Which means that the Campaign was pointless? Well, up to a point.

It did prove again the obvious but important fact that organized religion is an enemy of freedom of thought or expression. It also proved that there are too many people out there who leap the yawning logical chasm between "I don't like it" and "Burn it!" without blinking an eye.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I saw your address in *[the] Christian Herald* and thought it worth writing.

I was very disturbed to see in the Esso Petrol Station, Queen's Drive, Liverpool L13, "obscene" magazines on display where schoolchildren daily buy sweets and crisps on their way to school. These petrol stations have now been "turned" into shops. Even newsagents have tried to be discreet in displaying this type of magazine but Esso have them in full view of customers walking in and out of the shops even though on a top shelf. As a member of *[the] Community Standards Association*, I have written to Mrs Ruth Slater *[who she?]* about this, & she may well have taken action. But I thought you may wish to be informed also as no doubt other Esso shops have these magazines on display. I wish I had details of Esso Head office address! I would complain at great length.

So wrote AB of Liverpool. CD of Bristol wrote:

I saw your letter in the Christian Herald and I support your aims. I am alarmed at the way our country has sunk in recent years and do all I can to stem the tide. I cannot do very much. I am 72 in poor health so please send me details.
God bless you ever so much.

There's a non sequitur in there somewhere. From EF of the Bodmin Community Standards Association came:

Dear Mrs Harris,
Mr GH from Looe was at our recent meeting and spoke of the Campaign for Decency in Literature

It was decided I should write and thank you for the work you are doing.

We have been very concerned about published material for many years. The watershed of the Lady Chatterley's Lover's case was resulting in the 1970s in the impossibility of obtaining a conviction under the Obscene Publications Act for any obscene book.

As to magazines, our new concern is over the publication of indecent teenage magazines, leading the young reader into a taste for pornography. The magazine Viz is an example of this.

IJ of Pontllanfraith weighed in with:

It is with interest that I read of your "Campaign for Decency in Literature". For this, too, I pray that GOD will do a new work and raise up people who can clean up modern literature.

Not only literature though, for the whole realm of the media needs a thorough shake out. We really do need new generations of Mary Whitehouse.

I would like to know more about the work you do and be of some help if I am called to do.

The younger generations certainly need protection from the filth that is contained in modern literature.

May GOD bless you in your concern and in the work, giving you guidance, help and power to move mountains, the mountains of soul damaging material available in bookshops and libraries these times.

Then there was KL of Essex:

Will you please send me information about your campaign. I saw Sarah Harris's letter in the "Christian Herald" last week. I am a journalist and member of the National VALA [?] and very much against promiscuous pictures on the front of newspapers, which must have provoked more than one man to commit rape and which are calculated to corrupt young people, including those who have to deliver them at people's doors.

Followed by MN of Lancaster (whose letter is reproduced exactly as it was received):

I'm interested in joining your campaign for decency in literature. I don't own a television set, although the radio can be bad sometimes. I notice the flood of sexually explicit literature since WaterSTONE'S opened in our city about 5 or 6 years ago.

Also I've noticed the DUKE'S Playhouse which shows films bordering on pornography. Homosexual/lesbian. I'd like to see the place closed down.

It is harmful in the sense that people are tempted to see or read this dirt, then it acts like a drug and some cannot escape its clutches. If it isn't checked then we'll become like Sodom...

And OP of Hull:

I was delighted to read your article in The Christian Herald about the recently formed organisation - Campaign for Decency in Literature.

Only last week, I was angry to find a certain book, which seemed to me quite blasphemous, among the 'Bible and prayer book' section in a large W.H. Smith store. I came home feeling so outraged, my husband suggested I should do something about it. Then I read your article! Please would you let me have further details?

Then, inevitably, QR of Cardiff:

It was with interest that I read the letter of Sarah Harris in the viewpoints column of the S. Wales Echo on 6.6.94, concerning indecent and unacceptable literature.

It was only the week before I had finally decided to buy a copy of the so-called newspaper Daily Sport and send it to the Police in the hope of them taking some action against this "contact paper" for perversion. I decided instead to make a plea to you, and have sent some snippets of this paper to you, in case you are unaware of the filth which is openly displayed on the bottom shelf of every newspaper outlets I have come across.

My ten year old daughter has to innocently view this when she buys her comics and sweets. One does not have to leave anything to the imagination when confronted with this pen.

Although not in the same avenue as the Marquis de Sade I hope you can advise in this particular area of literature.

Page 2 of the Daily Sport I find extremely obscene in the fact sex advertising is alongside the corpses of the unfortunates in Rwanda.

I apologise for contents of material, and consider it offensive but important to show you.

After which ST of Glasgow was particularly welcome with:

We are interested in your aims and would like to have information about all the aspects.

Its something long overdue, the government of this country being totally helpless & inept in tackling anything more harrasing than the latest cricket score.

Just so.

Further down the same road...

In Extremis, a book recently published in Greece, appears to have suffered some Christian stick. This fully-illustrated 200-plus page volume, with contributions from writers worldwide, contains work on such themes and personalities as Jim Rose, Jim Jones, cannibal killers, body modifying, de Sade, Ed Kemper, and a host of others.

Following excellent returns when first released, sales for the book then plummeted. According to *In Extremis* editor, Bill Babounis, this stoppage of sales wasn't due to any lack of interest in the book, but rather the influence of the Church in Greece. In a letter to *Headpress*, dated July of 1994, Bill wrote:

'Sales of *In Extremis* seem to have picked up again, although we now know that the book is being "sabotaged" by certain bookstores that don't want

to irritate the Church by carrying it. There's a couple of stores, though, that apart from refusing to carry it, discourage customers from searching for it in other bookstores. I sent a few of my friends to ask for it and they had to sit through a lecture on why this book is "Evil" or "Despicable".

On pursuing his plight further, the following month Bill supplied Headpress with some more facts and a little background information to better understand the situation.

'In the middle of December 93, a series of satanic ritual sacrifices came to light. Apparently, two teenage girls and a 27-year-old woman were murdered by a satanic cult. In a country like Greece, lacking any such precedent, the news was extremely shocking. Don't forget that 85% of the population are Orthodox Christians. Suddenly, everybody discovered Satanism. There were TV talk shows, full-colour features in every magazine, etc. I was asked to speak as a "specialist" in two TV talk shows, but declined. The three murderers said that they got into Satanism by reading occult books. As a consequence, there was talk of banning such books and any films with an occult theme or context! The dust seems to have settled two months later - thankfully with no bills being passed. Through various connections (I'm working for 3rd Eye, Greece's most respected occult magazine), I found out that the Church actually knew of the murders a whole year before they were officially announced. They chose the best time to make the news public. I don't think it's any coincidence that the murders came to light just a few days before Christmas.

'The boycotting of In Extremis is a direct result of this situation. A lot of bookstore owners are afraid to stock it seeing as it contains an interview with Anton LaVey and references to various serial killers. In a sense, they prefer to ban the book themselves rather than face the wrath of the Church and the public outcry. Surprisingly, the book is selling well in a lot of other cities. In Athens, we get complaints all the time from people who "can't find it anywhere"!

'A final example of the Church's strength in Greece: About eight years ago, the socialist government tried to pass a bill by which it hoped to tax the Church's enormous moving and immovable property. There was a huge outcry from the Church and month-long protests from its more fanatical followers. In the end, a live TV talk show was arranged, where the Archbishop left the Minister of Religion speechless by telling him: "You bunch of insignificant politicians have been governing Greece for the past three years. We have been governing Greece for the past 2,000 years. You won't dare pass that bill." The bill, of course, was withdrawn.'

In Extremis is published by Survival Kit. For more information contact: Survival Kit, c/o Bill Babouris, Apostolopoulou 56, Halandri 152 31 - Athens, Greece.

WANTED

Photographs of an unusual and bizarre nature. Send in your rude snapshots, your death scene pics, your war atrocity collections. All photos will be treated with love and affection. Senders will be credited on use and receive a fabulous gift. Also keep those 'People who read Headpress' pics a comin'.

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subversion Mars bars & anarchy

UK's 1st SMUT FEST

David Kerekes & David Slater

The Smut Fest took place over three evenings during the month of October, 1994. Sunday 23, Wednesday 26, and Sunday 30. With the exception of Karen Greenlee, the interviews that follow were conducted after the Wednesday night performance. Some in a kitchen; one in a restaurant.

The things I do you'd never try

The things I get free you have to buy

'Primitive' The Groupies

Kerekes and Slater exit the tube station at Camden with a crowd of vacant commuters and spill like sewer rats into the street. The traffic is approaching rush-hour congestion and our friends weave between the almost-stationary vehicles. Hunger propels them towards the nearest greasy-spoon, an advertising board with chalked-on menu beckoning from the pavement. It's the cheapest eatery on the block, devoid of customers but with a nice green staining on the ceiling. The chairs are fastened to the tables and the tables are fastened to the floor, but incorrectly and with a complexity bordering on the surreal. It is necessary to approach the seat as one might the cockpit of a jet fighter plane and climb in. The meals are placed on the table, swamped, quite naturally, in chips. Greasy, fat chips. Seemingly dazzled by the sheen emitting from his dish, Slater mistakes the sugar pot for salt and pours freely onto his beans, egg and beefburger. "No, mate! That's the sugar pot!" too late the cry from the guy behind the counter. "You needn't have bothered," determines Kerekes upon taking a mouthful of his own All-Day Breakfast, "It's sweet enough already."

"Mmmm!" chirps Slater, resigning himself to the first mouthful as if it be the most delicious thing he ever did taste in his life.

The venue for the first ever UK Smut Fest is The

Underworld, a subterranean night-spot buried in the cellars of the Worlds End pub. A certain nausea overtakes our friends as they make their way to the Worlds End. Nausea and a loosening of the bowels. Once inside, they can't help but notice the strange-looking soul in a tweed sports jacket. Crazy or just plain pissed, he pulls a hand through his tightly cropped hair and gazes expectantly from his bar stool perch. The acidic reek of Old Spice aftershave is the giveaway. He's looking for girls.

The seats in the pub are ergonomically designed to fit the butt snugly. Which would be grand if they weren't made of cast iron and a syphon on the heat from each cheek. That isn't good for you. It's a little before 5pm – three hours before the second night of the Smut Fest gets under way. The seats, table and very ground begin to vibrate with a sensation akin to a passing underground train. A mild earth tremor familiar to all who frequented the late Scala cinema. But no train is this. Downstairs soundchecks are taking place. A late rehearsal with bass guitar throbbing through the floor – but not throbbing nearly as much as the Popstitutes backing tape. The iron seats in the Worlds End sing with the Hi-NRG beat. It makes for a bad tingling sensation in the region of the All-Day Breakfast.

Popstitute hail from San Francisco. They're here to provide the late-night bash after tonight's Smut Fest. Diet with his backing tape and DJ Remix with his disco records. The two of them together look like Gilbert & George, if Gilbert & George walked

around with dayglo satchels and DIET and REMIX dyed onto the back of their heads. They wander conspicuously into the Worlds End and are directed through to the Underworld. The guy in the tweed sports jacket barely bats an eyelid; his eyes are well and truly skewered upon the girl reading the newspaper four stools away. He gets up, makes his way over and points at something on the page she's reading. It's a kind of mad thing to do and elicits a predictably frayed smile from the girl. She continues to read. He continues to sweep on around the bar, stopping at several other unfortunates before finally arriving full-circle back at his seat. The girl goes to the phone. He stubs out a cigarette and pushes an ashtray to arm's length, nudging it further with his fingertips. After a short respite he does it again: nudging the ashtray with his fingertips, determined to get as much distance between him and it without actually leaving his seat. Mission accomplished, he flexes his muscles. Several of the bar staff have figured there is something amiss here. Nevertheless, they serve him another pint on request.

The girl with the newspaper returns and the guy in the sports jacket figures it's time to make a more positive move: a foolproof ice-breaker. As she reseats herself he tosses a pound coin on the floor behind her. Leaping from his stool, he stoops and retrieves the coin. "You've dropped this," he says and offers her a lager-stenching grin and his money. The girl leaves. He circles the bar, strutting bird-like. He returns to his stool and taps out another cigarette. He strikes a match across the polished wooden bartop, looks right, looks left, pulls the ashtray towards him.

Three nights of tinsel, cross-dressing, leather and latex. That's the Smut Fest, part of the 'Anarchy in the UK' season. The stage area has been decked out in a gloriously tasteless combination of potted house plant and sequins. An economy-sized backlit 'Smut Fest' sign, rather like an 'Exit', hangs centre-stage. Seating arrangements consist of regular £5-a-head seats (or standing up at the back if you're late and unlucky), and £10 for a table at the front with waitered service. These are the Wednesday night prices. The two Sunday night shows, less the 2am Popsitute finish, are, at £4 and £8, unfeasibly cheap.

It was Marisa Carr, returning from a trip to the United States, who decided a good idea would be to have a Smut Fest in the UK. Originating in a New York Burlesque strip bar in the mid-Eighties, the Smut Fest was conceived by Jennifer Blowdryer and Annie Sprinkle as the means to create a subversive and politicised sex-art cabaret. Since then, it has seen 10 years of touring performance in the US and proven the stomping ground for much new and innovative talent. The work to have emerged from the festival has become known as

Post-Porn Modernism. Tuppy Owens and Feminists Against Censorship (FAC) funded this, the Smut Fest's trans-Atlantic debut.

Participating in the show itself, Tuppy (*The Safer Sex Maniac's Diary*) Owens tells Kerekes and Slater that in order to take a piss on stage, she downed six pints of water backstage on Sunday night. Six pints proved to be more than enough. She could barely retain the contents of her bladder prior to her scheduled mounting of a pair of step-ladders and gushing forth. A sneak preview of her warm-up performance and a few trajectory calculations gives our friends a good indication of where *not* to sit tonight.

But there is still time – and beer – before all of that.

An empty cigarette packet is sent sliding down the length of the bar. Followed by a cigarette. In his increasingly apoplectic attempts to attract the opposite sex, the man in the tweed sports jacket leaps from his seat and follows his well-trodden route around the bar. Brimming pint in hand, he wanders towards our friends' table. "Thanks," he blurts, followed by a loud 'splat' as a quarter of the pot's contents spills around his feet. He drifts away and stares into the window of a bogus shop front that makes part of the decor of the pub.

Kerekes, as though seeking a cudgel to ward off a potential attack, finds in his coat pocket a Mars bar. King sized. The thought of ever getting round to eating it makes him sick. But its discovery does spark off several humorous anecdotes and keeps our weary travellers in good spirits. Kerekes relocates the emergency ration back from whence it came and off he and Slater head to the Underworld.

A number of items on tonight's schedule make the UK Smut Fest particularly appealing. One of them is the notorious Karen Greenlee, the understandably reclusive 'unrepentant necrophile'. Another of them is Jennifer Blowdryer, self-professed low level promoter, hack erotica writer, singer, stripper, you name it. Jennifer is the MC for the UK shows.

As time edges its way to kick-off, a crowd fills out the venue. The best seats after the £10 tables, that's where Kerekes and Slater sit. Then a big, familiar-looking fat man sits in front of them virtually eclipsing the stage.

"Isn't that Mike McShane?"

"Nah."

"It is. Wait till he turns round... Look, now! Mike McShane!"

"No it isn't."

"It is. He's probably been working on a new series of *Who's Line Is It Anyway?*"

"It isn't him at all," insists Kerekes, not in the mood for the puerile "*Oh look! There's...*" look-alike game.



Lisa Haight, Boy Bondage and... Mike McShane?

"Want another beer, then?" asks Slater and he makes for the Underworld bar only to discover that a two hand round down here comes in at mere pennies under £5. Fate repays him, however, in the Gents toilets where he discovers that a handful of loose change has been left on top of a urinal. But he's hesitant to take the money lest it be a signal of sorts and he has to forfeit something in return. Meanwhile, and contrary to his previous reservations, Kerekes, a little peckish, peels open the Mars bar and has it for tea. This he regrets instantly. Once the show starts he will have reason to regret it further.

The show starts.

One of the big speakers is aimed at the two chairs our friends presently occupy. It blasts forth with a funeral dirge at full volume. The lights are dimmed. Two minutes pass. Several figures step onto the stage area and take formation, but slowly. Very slowly. They stand, for the most part, with their backs to the audience. The first man calls; the other men answer. What exactly it is they say is lost to the sheer volume of sound passing through the big speaker and the slowly rising heckles of "Gerroff!" But this is the Execution Ritual, the suicide fantasy of Phil Adams, a man obsessed with the Adam's apple. The Dark Corporation prove to be the men standing menacingly to one side, bellowing. *[Among their number, Franko B. See interview last issue – Eds.]* The piece is overlong; each step, each syllable achingly accentuated. It is understandable why the Fest might have shifted the Ritual from its Sunday night slot of partway through the show, to where it is now, at the beginning. But it gets things off to a deflated start. More heckles. The conclusion draws near. A man is summoned onto the stage, oiled down, a ligature wrapped around his neck and – rather callously, given the length of time the

audience has had to wait for this – strangled instantly. The end. The performers trot off stage rather fast. Body-clocks suggest the performance has lasted 45 minutes but it chronographically registers at eight. Despite its tedium there is some applause.

Jennifer Blowdryer wanders on to provide a little continuity and announce the next act. This she does in a bored kind of way. One table which has sat vacant is recipient to late-arrivals. A group of 'lads' who look for all the world to be on a 'stag do'. A two-person TV crew from Germany flitters around the stage throughout the evening, recording, circling each of the acts. The next up is Tutu, taking charge of a deflated rubber doll and strapping on a dildo with which to fuck it up the ass. It hangs from the black plastic dick like a monstrous human-shaped condom. It encourages a rapturous response from the audience. When she rubs her cock over the heads of the lads they look somewhat bemused, even embarrassed. A funny moment occurs when the heavily-set Tutu almost knocks one of the monitors onto a punter seated at a table. It teeters precariously on its edge before the performer can regain its balance – a weaker vessel would not have had any choice but to let it go. After a little dancing, Tutu leaves the stage.

Danielle Willis takes to the podium. A dominatrix lesbian vampire from San Francisco, she reads from her book *Dogs in Lingerie*. The autobiographical piece 'Elegy for Andy Gibb' is particularly good; 'I'm No Good At Getting Rid Of People' would be if not for a few too many trip-ups in the recital. When Danielle exits, Jennifer queries, "What has happened to performance art?" and "What shall we do next?" A cry from the back: "Gerremoff!" Jennifer removes her top to appease the anonymous caller. Applause and catcalls. With a tin of white paint in her hand she moves forward as if to pour the contents over a member of the audience. But stops. Instead, she paints it over her breasts and over part of the stage set. Bored-like, she remains centre-stage for the next act: Bumel. Here begins an astonishing sliver of weirdness.

Jennifer stands before a painted backdrop through which Bumel – winner of the Alternative Miss World contest on several occasions – sticks his hands. In the tradition of novelty photographs on Blackpool's Pleasure Beach, his face peers through a third opening. A children's singalong about fingers and thumbs commences to the tune of 'Frère Jacques' and Bumel reciprocates with an appropriate finger-dance, his eyes rolling madly as he goes. Jennifer stands between the dancing digits, disengaged. When the song reaches its end, it starts over again but faster and at a more fevered pitch. Jennifer leaves the stage and Bumel calls for Tuppy Owens and a second girl to kill themselves. Tuppy throws a rope over a beam overhead, climbs upon a chair and entwines the rope around her neck. Still hidden

behind the backdrop, save for his face and hands, Bumel screams with laughter and encourages Tuppy to "do it, bitch. Kill your fuckin' self". 'Every Time We Say Goodbye' plays as she simulates a hanging (the second foray into 'snuff theatre' tonight). The two girls dead don wings and flutter about the place. When Bumel finally bursts from his hiding place – huge stacked heels, completely covered from head to toe in inflated freezer bags – an already supercharged performance kicks up a couple more gears. The management of sight and sound has, to this point, proven quite brilliant; the spectacle of a big balloon man stomping around to the sounds of 'Singin' in the Rain' and a condition akin to dreaming overtakes Kerekes and Slater. Plastic sheeting is provided to those closest to the stage. Tuppy climbs a pair of step-ladders and positions herself precariously at the top. Bumel springs open a dainty umbrella, the kind a child might use, and sits himself as best he can at the foot of the ladders. Lifting her dress to one side, Tuppy exposes her growl and grunt. It points itself at Bumel. It points itself at the table where the lads sit. Piss squirts onto Bumel and the umbrella. A small arc, as crystal as a freshwater spring, twists its way through the air. It isn't the six-pint gusher Kerekes and Slater anticipated. Some of the lads cover their beer, others vacate their seats. But Tuppy surely must have skimmed on the fluid intake tonight; the delivery is brief and only barely reaches the brolly. From atop the steps, she strains and strains. Bumel continues to sing and twirl his brolly at the foot of the ladder but it sure ain't rainin'. Indeed, in her straining to procure the requisite downpour, Tuppy, instead, deposits a compact little turd. To this she remains oblivious. Not even the heightened delirium of the audience triggers any suspicions. The whole place erupts into shrieks and howls – except from the one table that is, where, fearing a hail of excrement, the lads dive for cover.

It should be difficult to top such a spectacle, but Bumel manages it. He lies on his side and positions his backside toward the audience. In the manner of an oversize Mr Knuckles, a pair of lips is painted onto his bum cheeks. One lip per cheek. It looks like the crack in his ass is smiling. A song starts and the bum begins to sing. 'My Way': the Sid Vicious version. Flanking his butt, Bumel's two girl assistants proceed to peel the wrappers from Mars bars. King sized Mars bars. Kerekes shifts in his seat. They lick and salivate over the chocolate. Bumel too has a Mars bar and this he jams deep into his singing anus. A muscular clench shoots it out and Tuppy picks it from the stage and rams it back in. More Mars bars follow, some sheathed in condoms. Had Kerekes not digested his own chocolate bar earlier, he too could have thrown that to the stage for consumption.

Following Bumel, Jennifer Blowdryer provides a



Jennifer Blowdryer, Smut Fest UK. Photo © David Slater

musical interlude. Next up, Bill Levy, editor of *Suck* magazine in the Seventies, recites some of his prose. Unable to cut through audience banter – "You obviously don't want to listen to me" – Bill wraps up early his retelling of a high school reunion. Chumbawamba's Alice Nutter, in wig and leopard skin underwear, steps out for "I'm a Reader's Wife, me". Cigarette in hand, exposing her breasts and offering tips on a better bikini line, she tells how she manages to juggle life both as a housewife and occasional top-shelf model. The piece perhaps strains its point, but, courtesy of Alice slipping out of her monologue to deal with a heckler, any lull in the proceedings is averted. When one of the lads on the nearside table advances some nefarious request, he and his chums come in for a meticulous and seasoned barrage of put-downs. Deeming he's had enough, one guy finally kicks back his chair, throws up his hands in disgust and plows his way through the crowd and out the door. The whoops, whistles and rain of well-aimed beer mats and balled flyers ensure his friends sit the act through before leaving.

There comes an intermission in which the audience is encouraged to solicit the attentions of the lap dancing waiters and waitresses. A few audience members do participate, but on the whole shyness and reservation cuts the lap dancing intermission short.

Kellan, SM punk poet, delivers several oratories; a combination of angst, politics and sleaze (with a dodgy tirade entitled 'Ignoring Madonna' thrown in for good measure; a somewhat self-defeating dismissal of the goddess of pop). Visually more immediate (and coming on straight after a break), Kellan unlike Bill Levy, successfully grasps the attention of the audience and completes his stint. Lisa Haight, a tall, strange-looking reptilian beauty, in the persona of Alice Amazon, follows. With the aid of her Boy Bondage, an excessively small man, the duo run through an occasionally amusing skit on size and standing, sexual dominance, and role reversal. Boy Bondage must please his mistress and be at her every beck and call. But, misplacing

one of the props, a tumbler of water, pretty much brings the sketch to a dead stop. After several minutes of Boy fumbling about the stage trying to locate the item, a helpful soul from one of the tables points it out. His repayment for so doing is a belated and now rather impotent gag. Boy Bondage takes a swig of the water and sprays it back out at the fellow.

Karen Greenlee takes to the stage. Not, as one might envisage, attired in sensible knee-length skirt and grey cardigan, something modest and unassuming and in no way indicative of her pleasure, but in Gothic frills. Black ones at that. Visibly uncomfortable in front of a crowd and barely lifting her gaze from the notes before her, Karen commences to read. Her poetry – safe to describe as being in the manner of Edgar Allan Poe – manages a fairly warm response from the audience. But it's more her presence and what she might have to say between poems that holds the attention. She feels at ease enough to crack one joke and then is gone. Somewhat belatedly, Jennifer Blowdryer reminds everyone that, "for obvious reasons," no photographs be taken of the necrophile.

In a Halloween costume of pointed hat, cloak

and broomstick, set against a climate of thunder cracks and howling winds, Miss Daisy confers similarities between witch hunts and the government's Criminal Justice Bill. A student of women's studies funding her education by working European peepshows, Miss Daisy then pulls off her hat and cloak to dance an erotic dance in her leather underwear. The broom becomes an aid to masturbation and a little dog roams the stage, nonplussed. Of all the acts tonight, this is the most sexy. It happens to be the most *traditionalist* act tonight, with its pelvic thrusts, phallic prop, long blonde hair, and purchase on the voyeur instinct.

The last act on is Marisa Carr, "performance activist extraordinaire." Extravagant in her finery, hardboiled in her Divine-like make-up, Marisa strikes a music hall upper-class/working-class sensibility. From her opulent address to the audience, a kind of Vera Lynn wartime darling in reverse, oozing sincerity, she jumps into a chirpy cockney *me awd cock sparra* singalong with plenty of oom pah-pah's and innuendo. From this she swaggers into 'Don't Put Your Daughter On The Stage, Mrs Worthington', more poignant a sentiment than ever given the present circumstances and change of lyric. Amidst all of this, Marisa manages to crack a couple of eggs on her breasts, pull from within her underwear a string of sausages and bacon, place them into a frying pan and, with the heat generated by her mons venus, cook the lot. The raw meat concealed within underwear offers a further comparison to the late Divine. However, it is fair to add that Marisa Carr is a lot more sultry – and slimmer – than the overweight performer, with some vestige of purpose behind her outrages.

The Smut Fest finale has all the performers dancing together on stage. Those with cocks letting their cocks hang out; those with breasts, rubbing up against one another. It's a happy free-for-all that goes on for several minutes. After this, a short respite prior to Popstitute getting under way; the late-night entertainment. All the chairs and beer bottles are swept from the dance area and the Hi-NRG backing tape thuds into motion. From all corners of the club, Hi-NRG swingers get into the groove. Then Diet himself starts to sing and the grooving stops. It's an irritating campy squawk committed to a kind of sub-B52s hook-line, repeated incessantly. Diet is surrounded by various male dancers in various stages of undress. They won't stop dancing; he won't stop singing, even after he has driven half the club out.

During this singing and stuff, a London-based outfit prepare to demonstrate their prowess at suspension. On the stage, to one side, they have rigged up a pulley system and various restraining contraptions. The first volunteer is Diet himself, perhaps feeling more obliged than really wanting to participate. Jennifer takes over the singing as he is

Marisa Carr, Smut Fest UK. Photo © David Slater



suited in a strait-jacket, placed in a harness, hoisted several feet into the air and spun around. After several clockwise revolutions, he is sent spinning back again, anti-clockwise. And so it continues. Some time later Diet looks pale and lifeless. He has stopped spinning and his head is slumped on his chest. Nobody seems to notice. He sways ever-so-slightly like a dead man on a gallows. If not for the music one could hear the rope creaking. The guys in charge are busy rooting amongst their straps and buckles and cat-o-nine-tail whips. Jennifer finally observes Diet's dilemma and prompts the bondage crew to bring him down. In an admirable display of haste not panic, the guys attempt to lower the restricted man. But the pulley is snagged. Poor Diet has to be spun some more to untangle the rope. Clockwise or anti-clockwise? The guys aren't sure. So Diet is spun in various directions until the chinese knot is loosened. This added punishment proves too much and Diet's cheeks inflate and a stream of vomit splashes to the stage precisely where Tuppy's impromptu scatological offering had fallen. Back on the ground Diet's legs provide no support and he goes sliding to the floor. The guys unharness and revive him. Diet doesn't sing again.

But at least people are now dancing. One of the lads is demonstrating his Thai Boxing/Kung Fu dance routine. Spinning wildly, high-kicking the air, punching and chopping invisible foe he draws the attention and laughter of those safe on the balcony. Others on the dancefloor duck for cover as booted feet and fisted hands fly within centimetres of heads and kidneys. His dance becomes even more wild and fevered when the 'Wonder Woman' theme erupts from the sound system. Later, he will be overheard in the Gents describing himself as a composite of Frank Bruno and Rudolf Nureyev. Another stands stripped to the waist. It's the guy who'd been garroted in the opening execution ritual. Bored of showing people his cock he now fondles his oiled torso, runs his arms up to his neck and allows his right arm to continue upwards into a nazi salute. After a momentary pause, his arm drops and the nazi salute becomes the finger-thrusting 'bird'. This routine he repeats over and over, the display directed at a group of German homosexuals in an opposite corner. One character tires of the show, walks over, grabs him by the neck and threatens to head-butt his teeth out. The saluting stops. A self-conscious laugh follows and he turns his attention to the balcony, reaching up to tap Kerekes on the ankle. He indicates, with a grin, that he's thirsty and would like a sip from Kerekes' bottle if he may. A strange request, but Kerekes obliges. The half-full bottle is returned with but a half-inch of beer remaining. Slippery customer. Robbed of his over-priced booze, Kerekes considers using the bottle on the guy in the manner Burmel had used his Mars bar.

Further fun can be had watching volunteers as they step forward to have a go at inverted suspension and invariably come away the worse for their ordeal.

For Kerekes and Slater, there is no time. As eager as they might be to spin freely upside down with several bottles of Pils inside them and a constraint on their chest, it is time for them to leave. If this night has proven typical of the three-night event, the UK's first Smut Fest is a howling success. Its reception, and the sheer scope and quality of performance – with noted exception – has been immense. Of course, whether the organisers see any monetary return will go some way in determining whether the Fest remains a one-off in the UK or returns as a regular event. It is probably safe to assume no one, least of all performers, made very much out of all of this. If at all anything. But, oh, the glory...

Outside the Underworld, the cool Thursday morning air picks up our friends, guiding them to wherever it is they might be heading. Having learnt nothing by way of troubled digestion in the past 12 hours, a short detour and Kerekes takes in an All-Night eatery for a curly yellow cheese-thing on rye. This he regrets instantly.

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marisa carr

YOUR SKIN FOR SHOES

Marisa Carr is a nude model, a stripper, works in live performance, and is currently pulling together a short film titled *The Lesbian Vampires of Stoke Newington*. She organised the UK Smut Fest.

Headpress *Why did you decide to do a Smut Fest in England?*

Marisa Carr Well, I went to New York because I really wanted to meet people like Annie Sprinkle and the performance artists over there. I phoned up Annie and said, "Can I meet you" and she said, "Sure, come round. Do you model? I need a model." I went round, she took some photos and paid me. I needed a job and she got me a job in this domination parlour place. I had Jennifer Blowdryer's number, I'd heard of the Smut Festival, thought it was a great idea, and so rang up Jennifer. It was very hard to get hold of her but eventually I managed. Jennifer was really cool. She looked after me in New York and we got to be really good friends. I asked her, "Why don't we do a Smut Fest in England?" Many of the really interesting people who are dealing in issues of sleaze and sex – Annie, Lilly Brainjob, Penny Arcade – went through the Smut Fest. I thought if England isn't used to this sort of subject, this is the perfect platform to introduce them to it and Jennifer is the perfect hostess. People always pay attention to things that are American in England, the way they do with things that are English in America, you know, it's always that the other side is more interesting. So if we bring over Jennifer and Danielle and Karen, and mix them with Europeans – except that we couldn't find any Europeans – and English people, too, it would be a really interesting and dynamic festival. I went to Tuppy Owens, who organizes the Sex Maniacs Balls, and she was really into it and she funded it to a certain extent. Feminists Against Censorship paid the fares for the women from America, and it all came together.

You call yourself a Performance Activist. What exactly is that and how does it differ from a

Performance Artist?

It's a bit of a joke really, calling myself an activist instead of an artist. It's just that I really hate art and performance art, although in a way I suppose what I do is the most arty thing you can do. I just really don't like to be called an artist because I think that I don't go through artistic long-winded moral processes of making my work. Some people, that really turns them on and that's fine. I liken it more to being a comedienne or Rock 'n' Roll band, that's more where I'm coming from. I don't wake up in the morning and feel this essential thing that I have to do – I consciously, premeditatedly think of the show. I suppose I'm a bit more showbiz. I'm consciously sticking little bits together that fit to make a show, which is why I don't really call myself an artist in that sense.

How did you arrive at your performance last night, and what were the elements that came to make it?

Like in all my shows the whole basic thing is that I'm looking at Woman as traditional entertainer in low culture in this country. So I'm looking at the traditions of vaudeville and traditions of striptease and comedy and Rock 'n' Roll, and I'm trying to cross them all over to create something a little more subversive. I come on and I'm doing British

Marisa Carr. Photo: Annie Sprinkle



music hall but it's from *Oliver* and Noel Coward, and I change all the words and do a striptease that's not quite a normal striptease. I'm kind of making a joke on the British because I've got raw bacon down my cleavage and a string of sausages in my stockings, and I crack raw eggs on my tits and I try and serve it to the audience. So I'm kind of just having a really big laugh. It is hardcore and it is challenging to people's perceptions of sexual performance. The whole thing to me – it's about destroying, trashing cultures. And I'm kind of making a funny sex show that's different to your conventional sex show because it's more personalised. It's me making my funny anecdote on a sex show.

There was an element in the audience of the type of person you seem to be digging at.

That's the really important thing about the Smut Fest. We sent out a huge mailing to lots of magazines. It was looked at in *Lust*, *Forum* and maybe even in *Penthouse*. It was also listed in some art mags. People like *The Face* and *i-D* completely ignored us... but then they would. The whole concept of the festival was to put it in a burlesque bar, a real burlesque bar. I looked all over Soho for one. The Raymond Revue bar would have done it and would have censored it really heavily and charged us £500 per night. There was no small strip club in Soho that would take us, so basically we had to make the Underworld into a strip club. I wanted a proper sleazy strip club but nowhere would take us because the licensing in Westminster is heavier than in Camden. In Camden you can show full nudity and the police are a bit more laid back about things. In the Underworld, you've had the Jim Rose circus sideshow with Mr Lifo; Jesus Lizard pissing on the audience – so we knew that the management weren't that worried about weirdness and it just seemed the perfect place. The idea of having it in a burlesque bar or marketing it as a sex event is because we are talking about pornography, so the people who consume pornography and are happy to do that should certainly come as well as people who aren't so sure about it. It's very important that they see what we're doing, see what we're trying to say that's different to the normal sex show in Essex or Soho. That was meant to be. We were meant to have lads next to dykes, next to gay men, next to anarchists – that was the whole idea, to just have a really crazy audience.



Studio work. The Dungeon set

What kind of problems have you encountered organizing this festival?

Er... tiredness! Lots of people are really paranoid in London and the people from Countdown On Spanner were saying, "Oh, you'll get raided, you'll get shut down." They wanted me to liaise with the police because they thought the police would just shut us down and Tuppy said no they won't, don't be silly. Some of our acts are really controversial. Burnel sticks chocolate bars up his bum and somebody pisses on him and we do have lots of strippers doing strip. People were saying, "You can't have that, you'll have to cut that because there'll be plain clothes police officers in the audience and they'll just shut you down." Everyone was getting really paranoid, but nobody's tried to shut us down. One thing we advertised was we would have lap dancers in the audience – you don't really get lap dancing in England. Unfortunately, it was too crowded and the bouncers couldn't keep an eye on what was happening between the dancer and the punter. Everything was fine and the lads, even if they were a bit rowdy, I think had a really good time. But one guy – like an anarchist, grungy hippy type of guy – went and bit one of the waitresses' nipples and that really pissed me off. Anyway, we got a nice friendly bouncer to throw him out. In a way I think that lads that do go to strip clubs have more of a sense of the boundaries. If you take a load of anarchists to a sex show and they've never seen it before either they'll be like really conservative because they'll be so shocked, or they won't know the etiquette that goes on in these places... as this guy obviously didn't.

One performer had to pull out, didn't she?

She was having problems with social workers and her kids and she felt that the Smut Fest would be a very bad thing to be representing at this time.

Apparently the social workers found some books about weird sex in the house. It's just this whole moral clampdown... you have some kind of subversive literature or materials in your house and all of a sudden you're a child abuser. The odd thing about that is we had some anarchists come in on the first night and they wanted to bring their children. They had all their children with them. I said I'm sorry you can't bring your children in here. "There's nothing in the anarchy festival for us, nothing at all, you can't bring your children to anything, why can't we bring our children?" I said this is not the right event to choose, take your children to the book fair, this is a sex event and it's in a licensed venue serving alcohol. We were having a real fight with them, they really wanted to come in and bring their children. I said, if you support us don't bring your children, or you'll get us shut down.

So what do you think the future of the Smut Fest in England might be?

I don't know. It would be nice to do one every year if we could get some better funding. I've had to piece the money together from every little place, I haven't earned anything from it and I've worked for two months without payment. I know it's for charity and everything but I can't really afford to do that again. Otherwise, I'd like to do the Fest again in England. I think it's a lot of fun and it would be easier next time.

It has seemed to be bit of a one-person operation with you running around here, there and everywhere.

Tuppy kind of funded it and pulled out of the work and Jennifer hosts it and, even though I get cool, responsible people to work on it with me, nobody was really helping me with distribution and publicity. All those extra things. There was one little submissive guy who was a waiter and for both nights, all night long, he kept saying, "Marisa, is it okay if I go and get a drink," and "Can I wear this, or should I wear this?" and I said to him last night, "Look. I know you want me to mistress you through this whole night but I really haven't got the time and you're going to have to be dominant and choose your own clothes." It was like all these people were asking me everything all the time. It was driving me mad. At the end of the day lots of people will help you but nobody will make decisions, they want someone else to make the decision for them, "When should I go on?"... "I don't know, go on whenever the fuck you want to go on!"

It was a funny end to the show. These guys demonstrating their commercial suspension-cum-bondage gear and almost everyone who had a go being ill.

Really? I'd never have a go on one of those bloody horrible things personally.

The first guy was Diet, and it seemed like they forgot about him strapped in a straight jacket and hung from the ceiling. Jennifer saw he wasn't too happy. They had to untangle the ropes by spinning him round and he was throwing up...

He was throwing up?

Yeah. He just collapsed when they got him down. The next guy was hung upside down, spun around and ended up looking unconscious.

Those people go to every vaguely sex event and put their silly little suspension thing up and put their sign up behind them... and I suppose I thought that seeing the club is dying a terrible death, it might wake it up a bit. Diet is a really nice guy. Did he do his set after he'd been throwing up?

No, it was before.

Because all I could hear was his set in the other room and I thought, "Oh my god, I can't bear this."

It pretty much killed everything. There was nobody up there dancing when he was on. The floor was empty. Maybe that's why they put him in a straight-jacket...

Marisa in Leather Obsession No.6

ROSETTA STONE



Have you ever missed the last train and been stuck on a deserted station, or in a chilly waiting room with just one other person? And have you ever got talking to them for something to do and heard the most amazing story in your life?

And then, have you said goodbye when the train came and forgotten, because you were so tired, to ask how to keep in touch?

That's how it was with me when I met Rosetta Stone. I often think about what she told me. She spoke so freely - just because I asked if she minded terribly me mentioning it, but how come she got her lip pierced?



Studio work. The Dungeon set

I think it did kill it, really. Tuppy kept saying, "Get them off Marisa! Get them off!" I said I can't be responsible for getting them off, they've flown all the way from San Francisco to do their club tonight and they may be crap and I'm sorry I've booked them. He does a really good club in San Francisco. They're nice guys and they're best friends of Jennifer and they said, "We'll come over, we'll come over." Their club is really good. They have loads of people dancing in costumes and do really funny music.

Can you tell us about your earlier work.

I've been doing this kind of work for about five years and I went to a contemporary dance school in south London. It was really not good so I dropped out. Then I went to Brighton University and did a degree in Visual Performing Art. I did a number of pieces there. I did one called *The Third Traum* – that was the first piece I actually performed in public, when I was starting to take it a little more seriously – all about rape fantasies and the Holocaust and people didn't kind of get it. It was about the Jewish sexual psyche. I come from a Jewish family and they're all obsessed by the war and the Holocaust to an extent that I think they sexualize it. I think there's quite an S&M thing going round with a lot of young Jewish people that they don't recognize. It's such a big taboo, the Holocaust, but it's such a big Jewish obsession. Basically we cut up 'Tomorrow Belongs To Me' and one of the nazi speeches,

running round in little angel dresses slapping blood on our knickers and being like stone angels, then falling over. I never spoke, I was frightened to use my voice on stage. I was in this company in Brighton called Divas which was a German expressionist kind of group, reviving the Weimar Republic Cabaret. We toured around Europe with it. It was this kind of move-speak-dance-art show. It was interesting. She was trying to reinvent the Weimar thing from this Valeska Gert, this grotesque dancer of the 1930s. That was kind of an interesting background, but I realized I wanted to get more away from art and these kind of non-communicative subliminal images and into having a lot more fun, and just trashing the audience. Then I started speaking in my shows and did this big Holocaust-blood-on-your-knickers run around and it was quite interesting. We smashed glasses on our heads, it was like Performance Cliches Of Our Time No. 25, you know...

Real glasses?

Oh no, they were plastic glasses. It was kind of odd. We had these funny clown shoes. I knew what was going on but the audience was very confused... but then they were arty and probably loved it. Then I did *I Want Your Skin For My Shoes* which was when I moved into more Rock 'n' Roll theatre and away from art/dance/performance. I was working as a pornographic model to fund my education, and also in strip clubs in Essex. I entered the sex industry because I was always really interested in it from what I had read, and at first it was quite a novelty. Then I realized it was a good way to make money but not that much of a novelty anymore. This *Shoes* thing: I was this Bohemian British 1920s character who kills her lover to make him into shoes. So I was trying to do a British serial killer in the 1920s and I was in all the domination gear. It was this mad story that went round and round so the character in the beginning, who kills her lover to make him into a pair of shoes, turns out like a crazy woman who works in a shoe shop, kills her boss, drinks his blood out of a shoe and runs away to Mexico where she opens the Shoe Shop of Desires. And I get all the shoes out of the case, mess around with the shoes, put cream in them and put my feet in them. It was very loud and talky and I was trying to mix in sexual politics with a kind of mad cyberpunk story, kind of here/there, past/present, with all these vibrators coming out of my bag.

Then I went and did this other piece, *Wendy Decades Odyssey*, which was about dark sexual fantasies coming out of the closet. I did these three big pictures of me half as a man, half as a woman, coming out of a closet. They were bigger-than-life-size pictures: one was like a vampire man on the top and a little girl on the bottom. Another one I was Fu Manchu on the top and an S&M submissive on

the bottom. In the other I was a dirty old man on the top – I'd blanked out all my hair, we did a trick on the photograph so I was like bald – and I was a stripper on the bottom in stockings. I was trying to do vaudeville music hall, Rock 'n' Roll music hall, so I had a live guitarist on stage and we got old Cramps songs and Fifties songs and covered them, changed them, while dressed up as kind of a mixture between Wonder Woman and Captain America. We had a pink rubber Wendy house and a vibrator fence. The whole idea was we were sexual Super

Heroes because we'd overcome our darker sexual fantasies and the fantasies had to come out of the closet before we could get back into the Wendy house. Nobody understood what the fuck I was going on about. But I did. Everyone was saying, "Well, are you taking the piss out of women, out of feminism? Where do you stand?" I was saying, no of course I'm not, you know what I mean. People in the audience are so fucking anal they just can't relax and they say, "Well you're like a drag queen so you're taking the piss out of women." I say no I'm not taking the piss out of women I'm doing what I do and I'm a woman.

We just did this thing at the weekend where we are on our knees and we say, "I am woman, hear me roar," then we go "RAAAAAARRR!" They just thought we were taking the piss out of feminism, but maybe we are to an extent.

In a way you've got to be either pro or con feminism.

Yeah, everybody's so politically correct. We're independent and strong enough people to be up there on a stage in the first place. Feminists are just too upset too easily.

Tell us something about your earlier days of pornographic modelling.

I never really made the big time because I've got big tattoos. So I did really crap little fetish things like *Shiny* and *Leather Obsessions*. I didn't really work much in magazines but more in amateur photographer studios where they have a book of the girls and you get these silly old guys come in. There's one in Soho. They take pictures and you get lots of money, and they can't publish them – or

you sign a model release and they can; some of the pictures have shown up in *Shiny* and «O» and crap fetish magazines. I remained doing the amateur level because of my tattoos. I'd really love to do *Pent-house* but I look too weird.

So how did this amateur studio work? Some guy would come in, look through a book and say, "I want to photograph her?"

That's right. But they usually book in advance; it wasn't like a sweat shop, I used to get the regulars in. It was really sleazy, run by this little guy called Eric, and it was called Crown Studios – it probably still exists. It was this dusty, musty little place

that always smelled of dirty knickers for some reason. It was hysterical. There was the Bedroom Set which was supposed to look like a posh hotel bedroom, but it just didn't at all with its crappy falling-down wallpaper. Then they had the Living-room Set, which was on the opposite side of the room with palm wallpaper and a crappy little fireplace. Then they had the Dungeon Set with brick wallpaper. It was a really hysterical place. Eric, half way through the sessions, would knock on the door and bring you tea and biscuits. He was a really nice guy. You could go round the sets taking



Marisa now. Photo: Hous Randall



Marisa then. I Want Your Skin For My Shoes

pictures. We had different outfits for different sets.

Were the photographers taking pictures mainly for personal collections?

Yeah, but often they didn't have film in their cameras. It's the sleaziest end of modelling. It was money when I needed money. They were would-be porn photographers, but really useless. Some of them were more serious and would try and sell to the smaller magazines like *Razzle* and *Knave*, but generally they were just really gross guys. I used to belong to an agency and do stag nights in Essex, which is good money but really kind of dangerous stripping round Essex. I once did jelly wrestling in Ilford and they threw a glass into the ring. The first time I did a striptease at a stag night in Essex it was in a pub with all these mega Essex lads and I came on to this Spanish revolutionary song being really arty... I don't know, it was quite funny and I got through it just about without being killed. The agency got me a stag night supposedly for some journalist to do with BBC 2's *The Late Show*. They wanted a sexy performer but it needed to be politically correct so they got me to do my thing about the shoes. I just kept thinking *The Late Show* would never come see me normally but they'll employ me for their stag night. They couldn't handle a real stripper because they were too politically correct so they got a performance artist in so they could say, "Oh, we didn't have a stripper." They were the most boring bunch of jerks you ever met. They cracked up when I pulled one of them out of the audience. Real public schoolboys. Nerds basically. And these are the people that run the media in this country.

jennifer blowdryer

CLOSE TO THE REFRIGERATOR

Jennifer Blowdryer, the Smut Fest's Mistress of Ceremonies, is a New York resident writer, singer, actress, tutor, and... she likes to talk a lot and visit art galleries.

Headpress You were one of the originators of the Smut Fest.

Jennifer Blowdryer I was the originator. I did the first Smut Fest at a place called the ABC No Rio in Manhattan, which is a really nice free space. That was around 1988.

What kind of people did you have on?

Who I had then was, I think, Veronica Vera and this guy John Mozzer, who does *Weird Smut* comic books – I think he came in to sell comics – and this guy Dale Ashmun, you know who he is?

He writes for Psychotronic Video now.

Yeah, he's like an eternal character. He read something that he'd written for... er... I don't know... I don't know what he did, I don't remember. I think he was there, though. Mark Kramer from *Screw* read. There's another Kramer who's a music guy; a producer. This guy was at the time writing for *Screw*, then he wrote for *The Enquirer* and now he's relaxing... bit of a creep.

What did you do?

I read an interview that Annie Sprinkle had done with me for *Adam* magazine. It was before I'd done any of my own erotica hack writing, but I'd already appeared in *Penthouse* 'Hot Talk' and *Adam*. I read out loud the *Adam* interview that Annie did with me. I just thought it was kind of a gas... it was funny.

What kind of reaction was the Fest meeting with when it first started?

I did another show at the New Theatre and Veronica didn't like the word 'smut' because she thought it

was negative, you know. I guess they'd had enough of a battle to try and be positive about sexuality. But I really liked the word 'smut' so just to humour her we did one show that was called 'Double Dose of Eros' and another called 'Lust or Bust', two titles which I hated. Then I was able to return right back to Smut Fest.

How did Annie's post modern erotica get into it?

Well, Annie, she's my friend.... How did I meet Annie? When I moved to New York. I got a fellowship to a graduate writing programme at Columbia; I was in this stupid party band I'd started, White Trash Debutantes, with a moody transsexual; I had like a possessive limey alcoholic boyfriend, and I just realised that the kind of person I was I could easily continue in that mode for the next several years with kinda shit jobs. So, you know, I thought okay, I'll do this Columbia thing. So I got a fellowship and I was already putting out my first book then, my slang dictionary... which I did for another reason: revenge.

Revenge? On whom?

I'd lived with this guy, Peter Belsito. I thought he was really cute. He did this book called *Street Art* – which included bands and their singers – and I knew from having been around myself since I was 17 that he had not been around. That was patently obvious. And because I dumped him before the book was published, I came out with this little postage stamp size picture; while the girl who comforted him after I dumped him got two pages. In the book, he had me singing the wrong song in the wrong year. He had me singing a Cathlene song when I was doing Blowdryer songs. The Blowdryers was my first band, which was like two bulldykes and a gay guy. I would travel with Belsito as he put this book together, always the quiet blonde girlfriend. That's one of the reasons why I'm irreverent; I saw how people are. The big important anarchist, this or that arty person; when they are around someone they perceive as being able to help them and someone they perceive as not being able to help them. I was in the role of girlfriend, and I'd sit around and listen to the interviews and I saw how a book could be put together. He also did that book, *Notes From The Pop Underground*. He had interviews with SRL before the art students hit on them. Another book came out about The Dead Kennedys; about Biafra without Biafra authorising it. I had transcribed an interview that was used in that book and that was not a very cool thing to happen. He ran this magazine, *Ego*, it was his idea of beatnik history. He was a smart guy who'd gone to art school in Massachusetts and figured out there was a certain way one went about things. I wanted

to do things, too. I'd always hung out with this drag queen – well, this transsexual, Ginger Coyote – who did *Punk Globe*, and she always let me put little things in her magazine. I wanted to start writing a gossip column and a Transvestite of the Month feature. Whatever was happening I always wanted to do something against it. I guess I got mad that people were allowed to document things who hadn't been a part of those things.

Is that around the time your slang dictionary came out?



Modern English: A Trendy Slang Dictionary. Parts of that appeared in Ginger's *Punk Globe*. I went to a hippy publisher, Ron Turner from Last Gasp, who had published Peter Belsito's books. I brought a couple of photos and I brought my dictionary and said I wanted to do a slang dictionary. We went out for a sushi and he gave me 300 bucks and said go do it. I think all in all I got about \$1500 and \$800 in royalties, when I was like 23. That book did not make money, however. Nothing I've ever done has made money as far as I know.

Your role as MC at the Smut Fest is a very flow of conscious thing. Is that how you attack it all the time?

What you have to do is figure out what's going on

with yourself and with the people in the room. You have to feel what's going on enough so that you're really present, then you have to acknowledge it. Once you do that you can pretty much do anything. Then if people don't like it then, fuck, they can't take the truth and that's okay because I'm not auditioning for anything. I'm not a bag of potato chips and if they like me they buy a hundred more and I'll get rich. I'm not under that much pressure to be liked. The first thing I ever did was punk rock and I just got up there and screamed and I thought you were supposed to alienate people, like say the worst thing that you could think up. I never thought: I'll be in a band, and then I'll have a single, and then I'll have this, and then I'll have that... it was just something that I did. So I guess, yes, a stream of consciousness.

How much do you think the Smut Fest has changed you and how much do you think it has changed attitudes?

When I hit New York city I'd lived in San Francisco for eight years. I'd lived in what was a mutant oasis without knowing it, and I'm really lucky that I did that. From when I was 16, I grew up in this atmosphere where mostly gay men were in charge. I wasn't put down when I started to talk. I was avoided and thrown out of rooms, but I wasn't put down. So when I moved to New York I hooked up with Spider Webb, this tattoo artist, and he was living with Annie Sprinkle. She was also hanging around with Marko Vassi - who's not dead - an important erotica writer who came out of that Plato's Retreat swingers' area. I had no reason *not* to hang out with them, and when they interviewed me I had no reason *not* to admit or not to talk about what I'd done. I never say I've done more than I've done.

What other things have you done?

I had been in three porn movies; made one hardcore porn movie for money. I had worked out of a swing club. I got to Manhattan and I was really broke. I had a night where I went go-go dancing; a night where I was a dominatrix, ten minutes lap-dancing... I couldn't stand it, you know... three months where I worked in a lap-dancing parlour. Being a performer... we've all been in *Adam* magazine, because Annie Sprinkle puts out a column once a month (which she gets \$350 for). Every kinda weird girl poses for it. She does this interview sex-writer style, but is actually really cool and funny. One thing that I did do whenever I saw the tape recorders running was try to be... my keyboard player had hustled and made this trick eat out of a catfood bowl, and as a kid these were the first people I met and I had no idea how to live. I thought that was just great, so I would take it as my own story. It sounded irritating

and annoying, and to act against the hack erotica aspect I'd go, "Oh yeah, I like to make men eat from catfood bowls." I'd say these things and they would like tap-tap-tap type it all down.

Didn't the hack element annoy you?

It bugged me a little. The *avidness* of that cycle bugged me a little because the interview would come out in 10 magazines, you know. They really just sold to whoever the fuck they could; to each other, all the time. I appeared in those magazines while I was still at Columbia. It affected the people who work in publishing now, and the people who were in my schools. To them, I wasn't a real person anymore because I'd done these other things and I knew these other people. It made me kind of odd to a lot of people. That changed me early on, and then I think that doing the shows changed me a little more. But I'm smart, I've always been smart. I don't care. It doesn't mean that much to me. I'm not that proud of it but I know that my mother loves me and she always will love me. I made the Smut Fest into kinda like a family instead of, "Here's the go-go dancer," you know. I made it a family and it is now a way to become a starlet. For girls in their early-twenties, mid-twenties, rather than ostracised for being a stripper/performer, it has become a format. And I think it's wonderful that the way to be a starlet has changed. Just like it became a way to do performance art because Karen Finley did whatever she was saying, whatever she was doing. I imagine there are a lot of people who are not Karen Finley out there who are smearing chocolate over themselves and rolling around because this is the way to make it... which I think is kinda ridiculous and kinda really interesting. That's why last night I smeared paint on myself. I wanted to say this is the amount of tuition my parents paid for me to learn how to do this because it's really funny what can come out of a liberal arts education.

There was a moment when you had the paint and it looked like you were about to throw it at someone in the audience.

Yeah, yeah, I wanted to but I've been around for a long time and I know what you get. I'm also chaotic but I know what'll fuck up, what'll bring down an underground radio station, what'll bring down a club, you know. You just learn that. I mean, I'm 33 and I've been going at this since I was 17. I broke a glass too and I knew I couldn't throw it at the camera equipment and I knew I couldn't fuck with the German film crew but I did put something on his camera, enough to let him know that... not to stop him, but enough to let him know that I really don't like what you're doing. At that point I couldn't stop them without stopping everything. I couldn't do it,



Jennifer Blowdryer. Photo © David Kerekes

they're too invested in their feeling of hipness, you know, and too many people liked the fact that they were there and all I could do was fuck up his lens. So, yeah, I didn't throw it at the audience. It's similar to what Quentin Crisp says about terrorism: terrorism is like killing three people because you don't like the Queen. It's like terrorism... I don't know who's there, you know, could be anybody. The whole room felt down and anxious, and passive and critical, so I just let myself feel it and get worse and worse. People who don't know that's what I do, who think I come on with, "Hi, I'm Jennifer Blowdryer and it's kind of a bachelor party but it's artistic." They were like, "Are you okay? Maybe you shouldn't go on, you look like you're in pain." They were really trying to stop me going on stage and I was saying, this is what I do, I'm sorry.

There was sense of... nausea with certain acts. A kind of nightmarish quality.

Ha ha ha... nausea... that would make a good review. "Nauseating... nightmarish." Well it wasn't one of my better shows. You've got to see artists in terms

of their whole career, guys. I've had shows that were positive when I felt, like... when they were positive, you know. It depends what's going on, what's really going on. I felt a little bit *used* this time round and I didn't feel great about it. But I've had shows where the audience loves me; I love the audience, the performers loved each other, nobody's getting hurt and everybody's getting paid. I was real happy with those shows. If I'm not happy I will not act happy because I'm not an actress. Each thing I do is only five percent of my ego. I don't have that 'all or nothing' gamble on my last gig. I don't like doing a bad gig. But I thought I did a good gig last night. I don't mind the depression and the anger and the nausea. I would have felt it was a bad gig if I didn't acknowledge what was going on in that room... and if I didn't fuck with peoples' heads a little bit.

There was also the feeling that people didn't want to heckle.

That's because they were scared of me, because I'm right there.

Didn't you try to copyright the word 'smut'?

John Mozzer, who does *Weird Smut* comic book, he asked me if I could copyright 'Smut Fest' because he couldn't copyright the word 'smut'. He's a very compulsive detailed type of person and I just had to assume if he'd done everything to try and copyright the name of his comic and he couldn't do it, then I also couldn't do it. All I have going for me – for my idea not to be taken – is the street. All I have is the fact that I treat the people I work with well. I basically have integrity and if there's some promoter using my name, something's gonna happen. Something will happen to them, they will somehow go down. I know that and that's all I have, this kinda subconscious continuum. It works very well.

Has it actually come to a point where someone has attempted to take the Smut Fest for their own?

Yeah. Yeah, it has, in San Francisco. It's already happened to me in other things and I get upset about it. To keep your sanity and to hang around a long time you can't keep getting upset. You have to take a really long view, like, okay, they had to take my idea to get to step two, what's their step three gonna be? What? I'm gonna be here at step four. You have to really take that view about it. If you're really paranoid you get stuck and you can't do anything so, it's hard, it kinda hurt my feelings but I was able to make it positive.

What are the films that you've been in?

I was in goofy underground movies. A guy named K- [name deleted at the request of Ms Blowdryer – Eds.] who did a lot of crystal methedrine and is now quite mad... I was hanging out with Ginger Coyote at the time. We would go to this surf nightclub every night, that's where we would eat and that's where we would drink and that's how I survived through school. Our whole life centred around this club, and this kind of street way of exaggerating episodes, repeating a tag line again and again. It's just a way of hanging out that we did. I'd like to say she did, but I have to admit I was kinda in there. *Justice for Jennifer* was the first film I was in. It was all centred around this minor real-life episode where I was in a bathroom and this guy came in and this middle-aged Asian woman. This punk came in and this guy left and that was the whole incident. I told it to Ginger and we made it bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger until I had gone into the bathroom, been attacked, and this middle-aged Asian woman karate chopped the guy and layed him on the floor. The incident became the ultimate nightclub story. It went from sort of bumping up against a guy to a movie where I'm attacked, Joanna – the Asian woman – karate-chops him, we kidnap him, he gets tied up in a warehouse full of screaming women. One of them comes down on a pendulum, I'm on one side, she's on the other, and he's like castrated and cut in half and that's the end of the movie. And there's someone playing Geraldo Rivera coming in to interview everyone right after the attack. That's how queens hang out, you know. You just make things bigger and bigger, they become catch-lines and you live in your own little nutty world and I have to admit I lived there too.

Peter Belsito, the beatnik, had taken me to these early performance things – he was a smart guy; he had taken me to see Diamanda Galás and Spalding Gray – and he really spotted this thing that was about to become very big. But some of it was really boring and dull, like Antenna Theatre, these guys running around with little bee-things on their heads and body suits and that was their whole act. And we saw this thing, *Soon Three*, where the script was like, "I got close to the water... but I didn't go in the water," *ha ha ha*, and it was like repeated again and again and I thought it was the funniest thing. I would keep doing it till he made me shut up, "I am close to the refrigerator but I'm not going into the refrigerator..." *Ha ha ha*.

In another movie, I play this performance artist who's auditioning people. I'm very grandiose and very Aryan and I'm auditioning people to commit suicide on my programme *Suicide Line*. All these people badly want the exposure, and they tell me different ways that they would kill themselves on my show if I gave them the opportunity. I end up kidnapping, tied up, someone rescues me... I don't remember exactly how it ends. We went to LA

because K-, the director, was starting to go to LA a lot. We'd take these methedrine drives to LA with J. Sats Bret who's now dead from the 'lude and this little kid, Squirm Batty, and his mother... different people would come with us. We'd go around LA. El Duce from The Mentors he was in the movie, "I wanna be dragged down Sunset Boulevard until the tar mixes in with my rotting flesh." It was different people saying how they'd kill themselves. El Duce ends up hanging from the edge of a cliff up Laurel Canyon with a rope around him. He's the one who wins or something... I don't remember the plot. It was kind of a funny movie.

I made another movie about this Mulatto girl I'd gone to highschool with who was so... the black girls just hated her because she was half-black, but she was just so incredibly up-scale and meticulous. They almost hated her more than they hated me for being white. It was one of the reasons why I had to drop out of school because it would get very violent. I would travel around with her and black guys would go, "Hey sister," and she'd be like, "I beg your pardon?" I was on Quaalude once and I accidentally said... I was trying to say "Robin is like Jackie O" and I accidentally said "Blackie O", so we made a movie called *Blackie O* where she's married to the leader of Crew Aid, and ReMix – who was DJ-ing last night – is a really snobby faggot waiter and I'm like, Carlotta Fashion in some talkshow and I come out and tell everyone to eat cheese. This is like, years and years ago. She gets to be Blackie O and she's wearing little white gloves. Then I got a friend of mine Danielle Bardazzi, she was a woman who'd grown up in this cult in California, she was in the movie too and she goes, "Honey, that girl wore white gloves to gym class." She ended up being a corporate lawyer in real life. It was funny that she was around this underground scene because she was always trying to make a cake that was in perfect checkers, or paint a swastika tan sign on herself and lie out on the lawn to see if a perfect swastika came out. She was always involved in these very detailed little projects. There was nothing loose about that girl.

We showed those movies around LA and San Francisco and they were very popular. K- ended up doing a lot of speed and imagining conspiracy theories; he ended up living with my sister in a condominium in Santa Fe. They were both doing a lot of speed. He was also hooked in with the Philadelphia Mafia and my sister came to fear he'd had someone killed. He had her drug supply cut off after they'd broken up. Another time he found me on the Jersey shore years later and he showed up with a map, a combat suit and a radio notifying where all the police were and this really nice truck-van. I was just lying on the beach one day, I hadn't seen him in years and he just came up. He'd heard from someone that I was at the beach in New

Jersey and he'd gone to every beach and he found me. He ended up living on my living-room couch for about two or three months, but he never let the films get put out on video. He had a lot of reasons. They're probably lying in some room in Hollywood.

Tell us about the porn movie.

I sometimes feel like a hypocrite because sometimes the temptation is to say, "Oh yes, I'm this big sex worker and that's what I'm really rallying for..." and I just feel that my sex work was just as brief and ambiguous as anything else I ever did. So I have to watch myself that I don't make it bigger than it was or better or worse than it was. I made a porn movie when I was 19 years old. I met someone at a party. I was a young blonde girl and I always liked to dress up, and people would come up and give you their cards or they'd say that they're calling you about something else and you speak to them and they want you to be in a porn movie. So I was mildly coerced now and then into doing things, but after it had happened I knew what it was. I guess he was kind of a hustler. He was at some under-ground night event wearing a tennis outfit and I thought that was so unusual. For me in my environment it was like "Oh sure, I'll sleep with you." I always liked something that was different. So I just had a one night stand with him and he happened to be someone who recruited people for porn movies.

He hung out with me and he seemed to be crazy and then he raised the idea of doing a movie for \$200, and that seemed like a lot of money to me because I couldn't get hired anywhere. I lived on about three dollars a day for bus fares and food, I couldn't afford books at school and I didn't know whether to do it. The people that I asked about it like Diet from the Popstitutes, he was someone I would hang around and he had this very clear sense of Irish catholic... some kind of clear sense of morality. He's a very bright person. He and ReMix are smarter than myself. He had a certain kind of social web of what was and wasn't acceptable and he would get very violent about it. He kinda talked

me into it; he was my moral backdrop. So I went and did this movie and it was really funny because I actually had herpes at the time, but I didn't want to not get the money so I had to pretend I didn't have herpes. I had this underwear that I'd got from Woolworth's. The word had gone out on the street that there was this cool underwear at Woolworth's. It was really hard to buy trendy clothes in early trendy days because it wasn't a market, so if you wanted something that was really cool you'd have to get it made or go find it. So the minute there was anything remotely cool like, Olga Devolga had bought this underwear at Woolworth's and it kinda looked latexy and cool so I had on that and this dark blue lipstick that I'd got on a trip to London. So I was wearing my cool underwear and my blue lipstick and I had my hair all teased up and I had

what I thought was a very hip outfit. But, ha ha ha, it wasn't really what they wanted. This guy fucked me and he was gonna eat me out but I knew I had the herpes and I didn't like him so I dodged out of that without any-one noticing what was going on. They had some plot where he pays me and I like him so much that I give him the money back. One thing that bothered me was having to be blindfolded on the drive to the movie location. Everything about hardcore films is legal apart from the actual filming, so as



Photo © David Kerekes

long as they just magically appear they're okay. I wasn't allowed to see where I was going. When I left, the guy asked if I knew about any young girls, like really young, just playful, just running around, girls. And that made me queasy. I'm 19 and I know what I'm doing but that was kinda like, ugh... Then I forgot about it and it ended up in Diamond Films, just the racks of porn that are in all the porn stores. Michael actually saw it and said do you want to come down and see it and I said not really. I just wasn't that curious about it.

What was it called?

I don't remember. It's just *these movies*. Just a chain, a franchise of loops. I'm sure it's playing somewhere and I like the awareness that that gives me. There was another movie where they needed extras for a science fiction porn movie and that was how it tied in with this constant underground life – you don't know you're living it but that's how everything happens. So me and some transsexuals and some other women all trotted off dutifully to be extras and we got made-up all space-agey and tromped around. That wasn't much, only \$30. The other time I was in a movie it was a topless scene where I was supposed to be someone in a mental institution who thought they were Marilyn Monroe, and I was supposed to keep looking in a mirror but there wasn't any glass in it. There was an orgy scene and I did that because I wanted to go to England.

In New York years and years later, suprisingly I once again needed money. It was a really weird porn movie and I had a very bad cold or flu, I was quite often ill. Some guy was making a biker porn movie and he needed extras. I was sitting at this table in the background, trying not to shake with the flu. I just kinda sat there, watched what was going on and got my money. One of the guys who showed up with his Polaroids of girls was a low-level pimp who I'd actually interviewed. I was trying to do an interview for my college newspaper so I could enter this *Rolling Stone* contest and possibly win some money. I saw these people on all these other levels, but I was also with them down there on a necessity level. They trust you more but sometimes they don't trust you. There are jobs I haven't gotten because they know I'm a writer. I'd already made my name as a writer and they couldn't have me around. And I'm sure there are writers jobs I haven't got, you know, it goes both ways. It's like you're stuck in this holding pattern where you're always kinda ambiguous about everything, *ha ha ha*.

It's a big jump to the tutoring you do now, isn't it.

The first job I ever got teaching college was at the New York Institute of Technology, because I lied. I had my MA from Columbia – but all that was for was reading and writing for two years. But my writing was always okay and I liked reading anyway. So I had that and I went in and said I'd taught before which I hadn't and I said my father was a professor which was true and academia was not a foreign environment to me. I had my book out and the guy said, okay start teaching. When I started teaching I was doing dope, I walked into a morning class and faced seven people who... When you teach you get paid every one-and-a-half months and another reason he hired me is because he said the money is really bad and I said that's okay I'm writing for *Penthouse* just up the street, they give me a

thousand for an article which was true at the time. That was how I was able to afford to stop teaching. I was also going to do work with this dominatrix, Jolene. She had one of these hustles a little similar to what Veronica has now where powerful men want to be treated in a female way, they want to dress up, want someone to sit in the room while they do that, they want to be anally penetrated. They want to do this whole girl number, they want to reverse the power. She was gonna hire me just to be the person who was there while this happened and this one trick had met me – I think he was a Judge or something – and I was okay, I was about to get my first gig. She gave me \$50 to go over there but I was so disoriented, confused over when the class's computer lab was. So I kept calling up to reschedule with her and you can't reschedule when you're hustling. I mean, it's like working for a restaurant. Then I thought I had rescheduled so I could see both my computer lab and do the trick but I actually worked it out wrong. "Oh shit, I have a class!" I had to call up and cancel and that's not a cool thing to do when that amount of money is involved.

Teaching was always something I was interested in, that I could do, you know. I taught for five semesters, I didn't do a very good job, I got laid off. Now I'm teaching at another kind of well-off working class college. I'm an adjunct and that's not very hard work to get because what they do, instead of one professor, they hire like five adjuncts so you get no insurance, no benefits, no guarantees. They just hire you when they need you.

Are you still playing in a surf band.

Surfatica I call it. It was something I did in New York and then Baltimore but I got tired of it... well, actually I got kicked out of my own band. This bass player, who had a very submissive wife and was very uncomfortable working with women, got this guitarist who kinda wants to be dominated by women. He doesn't really have any character, he's kind of a rich boy, and they were going, "Our surf band will make it really big without that weird girl, yeah!" It got to the usual point it gets to when bands start to make it: they are doing well and they go crazy. They got what they thought was their first big gig and they didn't want me to do it. I've had that happen a lot. That's why I make music just part of what I do because it's very heartbreaking.

It seems your improvisational style wouldn't really fit in with a surf sound.

It did. I still work with one of the guys. I helped him move to New York, to a larger extent than I would have liked... to have his fucking dog for a month was a bad hit. We did this Galios Tavern in Baltimore



Photo © David Kerekes

that was open before prohibition. I gigged in one room, they didn't usually have bands there, we set up, and did three surf songs. I always performed with a lot of energy, really spastic, and I decided I wanted to experiment having energy but remaining still. So I'd come on, get a stool and sit down. I also like it when there's a visiting has-been at these places and they have to get a local pick-up band, very good studio musicians who play a few songs to pad things out, to razzle dazzle you. So the band would do surf songs and then I would come on as if they were my pick-up musicians padding time. I would do these songs I wrote and I would mix them in with old standards. For my last lounge gig I had these new songs for insomniacs and a song for divorcees. I walk up and down the stage and the band keeps playing for a while. I'll go walking off, I'll confuse them, and they keep playing to make it look dramatic and I just love seeing how the studio musicians have to cover up what exactly the real dynamics of the gig are, *ha ha ha*. Yeah, I like surf, but then you do it and want to go onto something else. I would have two go-go dancers in matching surf costumes (that my friend Alexis had made) and I would stand in the middle in my matching surf costume and the girls would be dancing and dancing and dancing and I would sing. I liked that idea, that was fun too. I like old go-go dancing. Go-go dancing to me means the Twist, the Swim, the Frog and all that. I always thought that was really cool dancing. My girlfriend Alexis is really good at it. She likes to be a showgirl, it's like real fun glamour. My friend ReMix, my friend from highschool, he's a really

good dancer and we learned how to dance together when we were kids. I know how to do the Jerk which a lot of people can't actually do because it's isometrics, but... I'm not really a dancer.

There's this one party band I started with Ginger, The White Trash Debutantes, and she's still going at it, much to my chagrin. I did actually write a press release about how we were all debutantes. I actually come from an old British upper class family. That really worked with the media, they really jumped on it, they just loved it to death. But then with Smut Fest you start getting calls from Australian people and guys from Screw magazine – who don't write near as well as I do – they come over and bicker about buying their fifty cent beer, whether expenses would pay for it or not. They would sit down and interview me and I'd always talk the way I'm talking now and they'd come away with nothing, because it wasn't black and white. I'm something like a writer, I'm like literature all the time, I can't stop. I wish I was like Lydia Lunch and Annie Sprinkle, they're really good at slogans so they do the mass media's work for them. They think of better things than the fucking hacks can think up... 'Post Porn Modernist', Annie made that up in three minutes over a cup of fucking tea.

NOTE Jennifer Blowdryer writes for *Headpress* next issue.



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karen greenlee

ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER

Karen Greenlee describes herself as an unemployed mortician. She achieved a certain notoriety in 1979 when convicted for 'illegally driving a hearse' and 'interfering with a burial'. This notoriety was extended with the publication of Amok Press' *Apocalypse Culture* in 1987 in which she appeared.

Headpress What are you doing here at the *Smut Fest*?

Karen Greenlee I'm reading some poetry that... um... seemed to entertain Customs for quite a while, as I spent over 11 hours... um... it takes me a few seconds sometimes to kinda get rolling, *ha ha ha*. It's weird, though, when I went on stage I was afraid I'd be tongue-tied but I wasn't, which was very surprising.

That was your first public performance, wasn't it?

In public, yes. Ever. I was surprised. And I even went out and was able to crack a few jokes. I was actually capable of doing something I never thought... you know. I really had some bad stage fright before that, because I'm really not a large-people-crowd kind of person. But the audience was good. I liked the audience.

What was the reaction of the audience?

Toward me? They seemed very positive. They were friendly, they clapped. I felt comfortable enough to crack jokes, which was surprising, I thought my brain would freeze. Yeah, so... Anyway, I had brought some of my poetry with me. I brought it in an envelope which was addressed to my friend. I didn't get a chance to mail it so I thought I would bring it across with me. I figured they [Customs] would look at it and see that it was personal – I mean I even opened it up for them because I figured they would wanna look inside, you know, to make sure I wasn't packing some big old upper California pot butt or something, *ha ha ha*. But, I figured that when they saw it was personal writing they would just say "Oh,

okay". But, no, no, no, they started reading it. Then the other night I was going through my things before I was supposed to do the show – I knew what I brought, but I didn't exactly remember because I was in a real hurry trying to get ready – and I read some of that stuff, *ha ha ha*! I tell you, I would have liked to have been a fly on the wall and just seen their faces! And they kept having to go higher and higher up, and higher up, and higher up, it was incredible. I was asked so many questions which didn't have any relevance to anything.

Did Customs appear to know already of who you were?

No, well... It was my fault because I should have mailed the stuff, but I didn't realise, you know, I mean I've never been out of the country before and I didn't realise how –this will be published after I've got out of the country, right? – I didn't realise how fucking anal those people are! You know, their knickers are in a bunch, permanently. Anal!

Maybe it would have been easier if it had been pot! Maybe they would have known how to react!

That's what was funny. I could have had, like, a bag of dope in each pocket. Though they did have a dog for when you walked through the door, I could have walked right by... though probably not with that good California stuff, you can smell it across the room. The other thing is, I had some photographs with me but they were so distracted by the poetry...



All photographs from the collection of Karen Greenlee

! If they had seen the photographs I would not be here. I mean, they were basically just a variety of types of photographs, but I had a couple of pictures that perhaps – I won't say what kind of pictures, but between that and the poetry...

Are the pictures part of the show?

No, I'm just going out and I'm reading a few poems... which doesn't seem like much but, even though I had a good reaction last time it's like, "Well, this is gonna be a different audience." So, hopefully they'll leave the eggs at home, *ha ha ha*. They seem real positive towards me. I was, like, really happy.

So, once the Customs hit on this envelope with the poems they didn't even bother to search you?

No, no. First, she discovered all my black clothing. "Oh, you like black clothing. You certainly have a lot of black clothing!" At that time I was feeling really invaded. I was saying, "Is there a law against that?" "No. No. I'm just observing." That was like their whole attitude. I came over and I did a TV show called *Equinox* – which will be aired January or February – but I didn't mention that when I came in, I just said I was gonna go stay with a friend and go on holiday. That's it. I just figured that would be like enough. I wasn't wearing any of my jewellery. I was dressed really straight. And, for some reason, I was selected. Maybe it was because I wrote 'Mortician' down on my card. I could have put down 'Artificial Inseminist' or something, *ha ha ha!* For some reason this woman, I don't know, something hit her and she decided, "Well, it's time to go through the bags." That was fine. I didn't bring anything with me – I wouldn't try to do that.

Just the poetry.

Yeah. That was my downfall, the poetry. Oh, the other thing was, too, I have this little set of articles from, like, the *Weekly World News*, *The Sun*... I call them 'Funny Funeral Moments'. And all these comics which have these jokes. I don't know if you've ever heard of *The Far Side*? He [Gary Larson] does a lot of really good death ones, you know, like Death is in a car going into the gas station and he's wearing a shroud and he's going, "Well, shall I check under the hood." I have a whole collection of those. And funny funeral stories, too, like, 'Mortician Burns Laundry And Sends Corpse To Cleaners.' Drunken funeral director. So, I have all these articles, and she [Customs] came across those first and, I really didn't think that those should arouse suspicion... Maybe that's why it took 11 hours, because they were all reading them and laughing upstairs? Then, she found my poetry, so between the two of those... And I didn't mention the TV show. My friend Donna,



Karen Greenlee at Caroline's Mansion.

who is doing the TV show, she was waiting for me and I even asked them to page her and let her know I was there. They wouldn't even do that. But I guess eventually she came looking for me. Anyway, they put it all together and talked to her separately, and she mentioned the TV show and that really stirred them up. But I'd just been on a 10-hour flight, in front of a screaming, squabbling child... and they don't ask you questions, they *interrogate* you. And there's a difference, a really serious difference. They try to wear you down. They would separate Donna and they would separate me, and they would talk to me and they would talk to Donna. Back and forth, back and forth. And it was like, "Oh, we gotta talk to somebody else. We gotta go talk to somebody else. We have to go higher up, higher up." I swear they were calling Parliament or the Queen, *somebody* to approve... Something called a 'Minister', they went that high up.

A member of Parliament.

Yeah. I knew that if the Queen wasn't in Russia they'd be calling her, *ha ha ha!* The questions they asked were like, "So, what are you gonna say on that TV show. Are you gonna say that Necrophilia is good? We're worried about The Youth of the UK." I was like, yeah, I'm gonna turn them all into necrophile zombies! Of course, the Smut Fest was *not* mentioned at all. I didn't bring any flyers, I didn't bring nothing on that. I made sure of that. I was like semi-smart, but I was very tired. They're like a dog with a bone – they get hold of it and they don't wanna let go. Back and forth. At first I said I was 'Karen Myers' and I had an interest in the subject; that Karen Greenlee was just somebody I interviewed. Then they came back, "No, *you're* Karen Greenlee." Well, would you admit it? I realise

how they were persecuting me, which has happened many times in my life. It's like, yeah, right, I'm just gonna tell you that I'm a necrophile and I'm here to read at the Smut Fest and go on TV! But the TV show... the only reason I consented to do that is because it's an intellectual-type programme. I've done tabloid TV – I did that once and that was enough. Fortunately, I was pro-necrophilia and they refused to air me, which was good because if people knew who I was I would have molotov cocktails thrown through my windows, they'd have the burning of the witch. Getting back to the Customs thing – they thought I was gonna corrupt the youth of the UK and I think they thought I was gonna leave the airport and hit the nearest funeral parlour. I even tried to have a little humour with them: "Oh, I left my shovel at home." And he's going, "I don't want any of your crap answers!" Fortunately I had Donna with me the first time and they finally go, well, you can stay do the TV show, come back Tuesday, then come back Friday. So we had to go back last Friday. They still have my passport. Oh, and they had to check out Marisa [Carr], where I was staying. Here's sweet Marisa, she's opening her home to me, such a sweet lady, she's got so much to do but she went all the way down there to Customs. So, Donna, Marisa and me, we call ourselves the 'Women of Terminal Three' – the dominatrix, the dyke, and the necrophile! It was incredibly stressful. The first time it was incredibly rough. The second time at least the guy was nice, and he was worn out, he was on my side.

It makes you think what exactly are they after? Are they trying to find a means of stopping you coming into the country?

They were asking stupid questions, really just trivial things which didn't even make sense, like, was the TV show gonna be aired before or after I left the country? Was my name gonna be used? I came into the country with some money, I had money and my ticket was paid for, plus it was a round-flight ticket, you know, but it was really stupid stuff, like, why didn't you tell us about the TV show in the first place? I said, "I was tired, and I didn't really think it was that important, and I'm here on holiday." Then they had to make sure I had "Quit". "When was the last time you *did* it? Are you currently still practising? And I had to go to the psychiatrist! Quote: I was told "Well, there are people we really don't know quite what to do with. We take them to the doctor to get an opinion."

What, a residential psychiatrist at the airport?

I don't know if he's a psychiatrist-physician kind of guy? He was really nice, though, really laid back – he was probably the most decent one I dealt with. I

told him, "No, I didn't come here so I could kill somebody and fuck them, you know, I left my shovel at home. I'm happy. I'm not a danger to myself or anybody else. I have a life to go back to. I just need a holiday real bad," which is no lie. And he was low-key. I think he asked me a few things, like, had I been doing this long, *ha ha ha*! But he was alright. It was just like back and forth, back and forth, back and forth.

I should imagine it's quite difficult to be a practising necrophile?

It is quite tough. It seems that no matter what sexuality you are, short of a necrophile, you have access to... you can go to a pub or something and find a partner, whether you're gay or straight. It is hard.

But, do you actually practice still?

Um... I'm not going to comment. On the grounds I'm... I'm not going to comment. I believe in keeping a very low profile. I've been in several foreign magazines, and one interview with me in an



Where it happened, The Sacramento Memorial Lawn.

American one, which was really, totally amusing, one of those cheap whack-off kind of magazines. The guy who was writing the article also did *Apocalypse Culture* [Adam Parfrey]. It was funny, on the front of the magazine were these two bicycle dykes wrapped around each other, and there's this headline: EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH CONVICTED CORPSE SNATCHER, KAREN GREENLEE! On the inside it was, THE WOMAN WHO FUCKS CORPSES! I had, like a P.O. Box, you know... I would like to meet other necrophiles, and when I get back to the States I'm going to get another P.O. Box [see below]. I hope there are fellow necrophiles out there who will contact me. I swear I won't steal your hearses!

Have you had much feedback since you first appeared in Apocalypse Culture?

I've had some. The article that appeared in the *chic*

magazine, I had a lot of convicts writing to me. There's even one guy on Death Row who willed me his body, but I haven't seen Federal Express arrive with any long packages for me, though! I keep hoping to hear from other necrophiles on a discreet, very discreet, level. Put that in the article... as like a personal ad! I would prefer to know a mortician that worked at a funeral home, or somebody that worked in a morgue. That kind of thing.

As opposed to some crazed killer who has gone out murdering people to have sex with them after they've done their deed?

Yeah. I really have an issue with that. Necrophiles are so often portrayed as *kill 'em so that I can fuck 'em*. That is part of a scope of things that they do to a, quote, 'victim'. I don't wish anybody dead or anything but if I'm working in a funeral home and fate and destiny somewhere down the line – that doesn't have anything to do with me – decides that that young man is gonna come through our funeral home, I'm going to try to be the Embalmer, the one who's taking care of things.

I like the funeral home, and I also like the settings



After the event anti-Greenlee fencing is erected.

of the funeral home. I'm very much into the flowers and the whole essence, you know, the curtains, the funeral music and the atmosphere. The living: they're all dressed in black – well, not so much in California!

How accurately do you find necrophiles being portrayed in the movies?

Love Me Deadly is a kind of favourite. Of course, you gotta love it just for Lyle Waggoner, *ha ha ha!* He's so *Lyle Waggoner!* At least she doesn't kill him so she can fuck him. But here is this woman – I would love to be this woman; I would absolutely love to be Lindsay Finch [Mary Wilcox] – she is independently wealthy, she goes to the funeral home, I mean, she and I have the same tastes in dead men. She's kissing some really nice looking corpses...

A face falls away, doesn't it?

Oh, the nose, the nose! It's got that little humour in it. She's just getting down there and... you know! Pop! *Ha ha ha*. Yeah, that would be very, very disorientating! But the dead men are, like, really good looking. Then she meets this mortician who offers her unlimited access. Unlimited! I mean, that's my dream, right! But the things that bother me about the movies is that, for some reason, they have to have these psychological explanations. You know, she shot her father as a little girl by accident. She's there with her little teddy bear, and those little flashbacks they have: her little long legs, and her little dress, prancing around daddy – I think that's kinda silly. But, some of the loved ones in that movie look very much like some of the loved ones I have been with. I really love the movie in that context, but it still has that kill 'em so you can fuck 'em theme.

As for *Nekromantik 2*, I guess I wish I was asked if my drawing could be used [A reproduction of a Greenlee sketch appears on a wall at the close of the picture – Eds.], but I also take it as complimentary. I just think the man should use better looking corpses! I was reading that book of yours last night, *Sex Murder Art...* Well I guess I better never go to Norway – it's illegal there! [Buy the book! – Cryptic Eds.] If Jörg Buttgeriet ever wants necrophiliac consultation, I would be happy to help!

I think one of the best movies is called *Mortuary Academy*. It stars Paul Bartel and Mary Woronov. That is one of my favourites – a comedy about a mortuary college. Paul Bartel is this necrophile mortician. Even though it's a comedy, I think it's one of the best portrayals of necrophilia, at least necrophilia in the context that I see it, because he totally falls in love with this cheerleader who choked to death on a piece of popcorn, *ha ha ha!* He's romantic. He even puts her in the car and takes her out to the seaside and he's drinking champagne, he kinda like has sex with her – they don't show that part. He passes out, the tide rises and starts washing her corpse away. Then there are all these frat guys having a party on the beach and they all – they don't notice she's dead, I mean, I don't advocate, you know, gang-banging... but, anyway, it's a funny movie. I think it probably best portrays, like I say, the way that I see necrophilia.

There's also a Swiss movie by the name of Bloodlust, about a guy who likes the feel and presence of a corpse...

Oh, yes. Could you write down the details of that? I see it as romantic... It's not like I wanna cut the person up; not like, "I can do anything to you, you can't talk back." It is – it's the presence, the aura of

death. The coldness. The whole thing. It touches all the senses, everything. The feel of the cold, which I really – that's quite attractive. The sound, the funeral music playing, and the smells of the funeral parlour, even of the deceased himself... the cosmetics. Just the whole... It's very sexually gratifying, too. I mean, it's spiritual, but it's also horny! Mine don't walk down the street, but if you see somebody that you're sexually attracted to, your type or whatever, your heart skips a beat. I had one a while back who died of a heart attack. He was 20-years-old but he died of a heart attack... but I don't mind a few bullet wounds or stab wounds or if they've been in a car wreck with the odd scrape here and there, or whatever. When I was most active, before the days of AIDS, there wasn't a lot of people who died of some lingering, horrible illness. It's very sad. I've got a very good friend who's died [of AIDS] – no, I'm not interested in his body! It's like, that's my friend. There is an attachment to each loved one, but it's different than with a living friend. On the other hand, even with the living you have levels of friendship and relationships, that sort of thing. So this is just part of a facet. My main facet of life: I love the dead. It's natural for me.

Do you have relationships with living boyfriends?

Not anymore, no. I fell in love once with a live man. We're actually to this day still very, very good friends. It's just totally platonic. But it's not fair for them or for me. I think if you're involved in a relationship – or at least the context of what I think a relationship is – it should be kind of exclusive, and that person has a really special place nobody can fill, that kind of thing. I don't think it should be a divided love... and when the cold wind blows, I'm at the funeral home! But if I was involved with him and he went out with, you know, another woman, I might even feel a little funny. I've had relationships with live men, both good and bad, but it just isn't right. Like a gay person trying to have heterosexual... you know, or heterosexual trying to be gay.

Were your boyfriends ever aware of your necrophiliac tendencies?

Yes, some of them were.

Were they shocked? How did they react?

Some of them were shocked... I learned there was a word for it when I was, like, 14-years-old. Before that I had feelings, like when [John F.] Kennedy died I wanted to go out and play but the funeral was on TV and I was just watching that funeral... I remember telling my father, "Will you tell me when they open up the casket?" and for some reason I knew what a casket was. I cannot tell you how I

know that, but I knew. I mean, I was like a little kid, very, very little. Then, when I was in First Grade, when I was about six or seven, yeah, seven, I had a little friend and we were playing in the parking lot of her apartment building. Her little brother had been run over a couple of weeks before and she was telling me about it. She took me to the spot and I remember picturing his body laying there, and the blood... I think it was the first time I knew there were such things as sexual traumas! I got very, very excited. I was like picturing him in my mind – because I have a photographic kind of memory – and... um... well... you may have it on paper, but you also, like, gotta keep it in your brain! *[taps her temple; laughs]* Yeah, I was quite excited. I've always had that inclination. I used to have little pet cemeteries for my pets when they died. I was just a little mortician trying to grow up to be a big mortician. When I was 14, I figured out there was a word for all of it – and that actually was when I first saw *Love Me Deadly*. For about a year or so before that I was having dreams constantly about digging up graves and making love with dead bodies. But they didn't bother me, they excited me. When I was about 15, 16, a high school girl, I would go up to the local funeral homes. "I wanna be a funeral home director, I wanna be a mortician when I get older. Could you tell me what it's about and could you show me around?" You know, nine times out of ten they would. And if there was a body in there, I'd get to see a dead body. I didn't get to touch one yet, though. Then I went through a Christian phase when I was 16, "Whoa, these desires are strong!" Plus I was having a lot of other type of turmoil in my life. It was very, very rough growing up with my family. I didn't exactly have the greatest time growing up. I was in Foster homes and stuff like that, so I decided in order for me to survive I'll become a Christian! *Ha ha ha*.

What denomination were you raised?

I was brought up Protestant, but my family wasn't really religious. Sure, on Easter Sunday they'd dress me up in these little dresses, with the black patent leather shoes and everything... So, when I was like 16, I met this Jehovah's Witness – she was real nice! So, I decided I was gonna become a Jehovah's Witness, *ha ha ha*!

You didn't have to go door-to-door, did you?

Yes, I did! Yes, I did! But it's gonna kill me, those necrophiliac desires! The thing is, I used to study my *Watchtower* at the cemetery, *ha ha ha*. I never strayed too far away! Then, in 78, I decided I wanted to go in the funeral business. I got in contact with this mortician and he decided, "Well, if you really want to do this you come down and watch an



Greenlee's seasoned coffin restored on the outside only. When it was first acquired a piece of foot-bone was found inside. The fragment was given a decent burial.

embalming." I was, like, "Cool, I'm getting a little further this time... But, I'm not supposed to be thinking those thoughts! You'll never be approved of by God!" Anyway, he got a case, a body to take care of, gave me a call and we went down to the local morgue. He was gonna move the body on to a gurney, and says, "Why don't you give me a hand?" so I grab the corpse's legs and I was, like, "Whoo!" So we moved him on the gurney and took him to the prep room, and he was embalming him. It was like a full post-, full autopsy, it was the first body I ever saw and I was really watching him. The other weird thing is he was looking for his instruments and for some reason I knew what he was talking about, and I would point, "There it is." He was more nervous than I was. I survived the embalming quite well, I still wanted to be a mortician, so they invited me to live with them and work in their funeral home. That's how I got in the business. I stayed in the business a while, but then the desires were getting so incredibly strong – but I was still holding out; I would take a long time dressing the bodies and combing their hair and my hand isn't down there in their pants or anything. When you embalm a body, you have to massage them, you have to like totally do this [*demonstrates kneading technique*], rub and massage, to get the embalming fluid distributed through the system. You have on gloves, but you're still rubbing like... you know, you're still having full contact with cold flesh. There was a very hard internal war going on there. I was still maintaining my faith, but the desires started getting too strong, so I left the business... for a while.

You left of your own accord?

Yeah.

How old were you when you left?

I was 20. I left and I went to Florida. But I kept trying to get jobs in funeral homes! I ended up moving back to California a few months later, and that's when I got a job at the notorious place where I took an unauthorized midnight ride. I got a job there. I was doing fine, but it was getting like really strong. It was like – I was enjoying it more and fighting it less! I worked there at least a month or so. Almost two months, actually. No, about a month-and-a-half. Anyway, I worked there and I didn't do anything. But, on October 30, 1979, in came this gorgeous young 27-year-old. I went down to the morgue, had to pick him up, and brought him back... and I knew the second I pulled back the sheet that, well, tonight's the night – in the immortal words of Rod Stewart! I embalmed him and stuff, and later on that night I came down stairs and that was the first time I ever... I made the table squeak, let's put it that way, *ha ha ha*. And it was incredible. It was just, you

know, so right. It was so fucking right. But, of course, I went through all this guilt thing. More cases come along. And every time they bury somebody – to this day – it's still hard when you lose your loved one. Even though you know in your mind and heart that it's only temporary... you gotta grab onto those moments, you know.

I was keeping rather busy. I was working incredible hours – I also lived above the prep room in a quite large studio apartment – and I was still trying to be Little Miss Christian Girl, and, of course, that just was not working. Then along came John – I was really kinda head over heels – and they left him in the back of the hearse and I pulled out the flowers one night, and that was it. We just headed off. Went up to the mountains, was gone for several days... the next thing I knew, there's a cop with a shotgun throwing rocks at the hearse, saying, "Get the fuck out of this or I'm gonna blow this thing apart." And I still stayed in there. Figured it was the end. So I swallowed a bunch of pills, and... um... stayed in there a while longer, and then there's this big group of cops around and they took a bullhorn... and finally I just opened the door. They put me in an ambulance, gave me this shit which makes you throw up. So, I'm in hospital, and the next thing I know, suddenly I hear the word "Reporters". And the thought never even crossed my mind, totally didn't... see, I didn't know all this was going on while I was gone, but they originally thought I'd been kidnapped. I couldn't possibly have, just willingly, got in a hearse and took off with a young dead guy in the back?! I mean, that's not even in their thinking! They thought I'd been kidnapped. So it was already a media thing, I guess.

I can imagine people seeing your picture in the paper: "Hey! Didn't she sell us a copy of The Watchtower one time?!"

Oh yeah! I was living in a very small town, everybody knew everybody, and I was all over the fucking news. I had to go to the jail with a hood over my head, the whole thing. I was in jail for 11 days. Oh, the funny thing was, though, here I was in jail, near Christmas time – I spent Christmas of 79 in jail – and it's a single-celled area where I'm at, you know, it's for all the *[taps her head]* ones we don't know what to do with, and after several days in my cell I finally decide to go out to the Day Room to sit out there. And there are these grown women, all standing around singing 'Jingle Bells'; I walk in the room, they look at me, and instead of singing "One horse open sleigh", they sing "In a wide-open hearse". I mean, they're singing like Third Grade kindergarten kids, you know, changing the words to 'Jingle Bells' and making fun of me, *ha ha ha*. At the time I just shook my head, it wasn't enough to even answer. Anyway, I went through that and the court thing –

it's called a misdemeanour, interfering with a funeral – and then there was a lawsuit, John's mother, I don't blame her, if it was the other way around I'd probably do the same, his mother was suing the funeral home. That was in litigation for several years. In the meantime, I went out and got a life for myself. I was in a mortuary college, and working in a very nice funeral home. But one day it all caught up with me and I lost everything. And I had to go back to the trial, this horrendous 18-day trial...

Basically, nowadays, I'm more laid back, kinda stay out of trouble. I write poetry, I'm gonna be putting out a book. My drawings, poems, a couple of short stories. I'll have that out by next year. Maybe a Halloween release or something.

How have your family handled this? Have they been supportive?

No. I'm not really close with my family. My friends are my family. It doesn't exist for my family, which is fine because I don't wanna hear their opinions anyway.

You don't like to be photographed. How did you get on with Equinox? Did you stand in shadow for the TV programme?

No, but if it's ever released in the States, it's part of the contract that my face be blotted out. Plus my name is not used. And two, it wasn't in the format of the States' tabloid TV – I don't care what they would have offered me, I would never do that again. I don't need to get my face recognised.

Anyone with similar interests may write Karen at:
41 Sutter St. #1030, San Francisco, Ca. 94140, USA



PEOPLE WHO READ HEADPRESS #2
One less reader! Melvin Grady pictured seconds before death. Having just bought and flicked through the pages of our last issue, Grady stepped semi-dazed into the path of an approaching car. The driver said, "There was no time to stop so I just grabbed my camera. I found your magazine caught in my radiator grille when I got home. Do I get a free subscription?"

danielle willis

THE LUST DISTRICT

Danielle Willis has worked as a nanny, poodle groomer, stripper and dominatrix. Here, she sits down to eat. It's an Italian Café/Restaurant in Tufnell Park, going on for 7.30pm. After running through her order with the guy behind the counter, a special diet recommended by the gymnasium she attends in San Francisco, Danielle returns to her seat. The waitress follows with two cups of coffee and a mug of tea. Filtering through the wall a radio station plays pop hits from yesteryear.

Danielle Willis Here we are at the lovely Spaghetti House.

David Kerekes So, what about the dungeons?

Willis Ha ha ha. I worked as a dominatrix for a while and I guess people's main misconceptions about dungeons is that they're some kind of glamorous *Story Of O*, *Venus In Furs* kind of thing, and in actuality it's really a nine-to-five job. You basically wait around the house for people to call you, and they show up, and they're generally pretty nerdy. People who played *Dungeons & Dragons* as kids, grew up and became S&M people. Basically I'm not too enamoured with the S&M scene for real – I see it more as a job. I'm not really a big S&M person myself. More of somebody who does it for the money.

David Slater You are listed as a stripper on the Smut Fest programme.

Willis I'm still currently a stripper. I work at the Century Theater in San Francisco. I've been doing that since 1987. It's a pretty good living. It's a good way to make a living if you're an artist – it's unstructured, you can basically make your own hours. I can tell my boss, "Oh, I'm going to England

for two weeks!" and they don't mind you doing it. But what I am mainly is a writer. *Dogs In Lingerie* is both autobiographical and fictional. The stuff I'm writing now is mainly horror fiction. One of the stories in *Dogs In Lingerie*, 'The Gift Of Neptune', is coming out in an anthology called – unfortunately enough, ha ha ha – *Love In Vain*. It's an anthology of vampire stories from HarperCollins, should be this month. And there's another story I sold called 'Happy Couple' which is gonna be in an Avon horror anthology called *Forbidden Acts*. Should be out sometime in 1995.

I've sorta moved into writing more fiction. The last performance I did was a six-month run of a play called *Breakfast In The Flesh District*, which was an autobiographical play taking me from childhood, through my nervous breakdown at college, through me being a stripper and hanging at with drag queens in San Francisco, going on to becoming a dominatrix, etcetera, etcetera. I should probably send you a videotape of it. I'll send you a videotape.

Kerekes When did you become... um... a vampire?

Willis Become a vampire? Um [pause]. You mean when did I get my teeth done?

Slater When did your interest in vampires start?

Willis My interest in vampires started with... when I was little kid, I went to a museum with my babysitter and there was a skeleton on display, hanging from a hook in the ceiling. I asked my babysitter what it was and she told me it was a dead person. I said, "It doesn't look like a person to me," and she said, "Well, that's what happens to you after you die. All your flesh rots away and you become bone." That freaked me out quite a bit and I really didn't wanna die. Sometime later I saw a vampire movie and vampires don't die. So I became fascinated that way. And when I was a little kid I used to stay up late and watch all the horror films. That always fascinated me. I guess, ever since I was about 11 I've been into it. I got my teeth done last year.

Kerekes How do they actually do that? [meaning the teeth]

Willis They take... They're capped. They're porcelain caps. They're permanent. They're cemented to my teeth.

Kerekes Do they not get in the way?

Willis No, not at all. Not at all. They actually don't cut. They're slightly blunted at the tips so they don't cut.

Kerekes Do you find having fangs a bonus for

when you're stripping?

Willis Yes and no. I mean, I find they're actually subtle enough that people choose to either notice them or not. And I can hide them if I have to *[demonstrates by smiling with the canines obscured, and again with the teeth clearly visible]*. I can show them or not show them, depending on... ah, here we are...

[Ms. Willis' order arrives: plenty of white meat, macaroni and broccoli. But no bolognese sauce. Instead it's a dark meat sauce. She calls the waitress over and, misunderstanding the complaint, the waitress goes and gets more of the meat sauce. On this, Danielle takes her food back to the kitchen where her teeth evoke the usual hard looks. The cook determines 'no problem' and sets to correcting the dish. We continue with the interview as Danielle awaits the return of her food.]

Kerekes Going back to the story of you as a young girl, as a parallel, when we met yesterday outside the pub there were two little boys collecting 'Penny for the Guy'. They saw you smile and were a little freaked by your fangs.

Willis Really? Some people notice it and some people don't. It's kinda fun when they do. *Ha ha ha*. If I wanna scare the little kids I can. When I first got them done, I was down at an amusement park in Santa Cruz and there were these little kids waiting in line for the Haunted Mansion ride, and one of the little kids was screaming that they didn't wanna go in, so I just turned around and smiled, like, *[sugary inflection]* "It's very nice!"... So why do they call it 'Penny for the Guy', I don't understand that?

Kerekes It refers back to Guy Fawkes, the guy who tried to blow up the Houses of Parliament, and on November 5th they burn an effigy of him on a pyre...

Slater 'Penny for the Guy' is just a socially acceptable form of begging really.

Kerekes A tradition.

Slater I used to do it when I was a kid.

Kerekes I suppose, in a way, it's the equivalent of Halloween and 'Trick or Treat'.

Willis I was surprised that England didn't have Halloween. I would have thought that that was a tradition which came over from England.

Kerekes They do have a Halloween here but they don't celebrate it to any great degree.

Slater Well, the witches do. Covers of witches. It's the night of the year for them.

Kerekes So how does it work? I would think that you are a pretty unusual stripper?

Willis In San Francisco there are a lot of unusual strippers, and you can get away with being tattooed or pierced or dancing to weird music. But, yeah, I usually dance to Industrial, Gothic, or Rock, or something. You can pick your own music. It's pretty laid back.

[At this juncture, Danielle is still awaiting the return of her meal. The waitress calls over.]

Willis What?

Waitress Salt?



Willis Salt? Yeah.

Slater Complicated meal!

Willis It was good last time. They just sort of... blew it this time. *Ha ha ha*.

Slater You've eaten here before then, the same meal?

Willis I had it yesterday. They made it with spinach



Artwork: Danielle Willis

and it was really good.

[Waitress comes over.]

Waitress [dryly] Do you want some garlic with it?

Willis Sure.

Kerekes So, you still have a dungeon?

Willis Um, no, I do freelance work. I have clients who I'll see in their homes and do sessions with them there.

Kerekes Do any ever want to be bitten?

Willis I have some clients that are into the vampire thing, but I don't usually do that with... I do have a certain select band of people I do that with, but it's a closed circuit. I don't play around with strangers' blood. I mean, in a session, if somebody's really

into the vampire thing, I'll pretend to, you know, go through the theatrics of it but not really do it.

Kerekes I notice in the back of *Dogs In Lingerie* there's a reprint of an arrest sheet.

Willis Yeah. I was doing a performance... Jennifer [Blowdryer] was there that night. We were doing a Smut Fest in San Francisco, I arrived late and the bouncer, for some reason, didn't know who I was and wouldn't let me in. We wound up in an altercation. The police showed up and tried to restrain me and I wound up kicking one of them in the balls and biting the other in the ankle. Fortunately the charges got dropped. *Ha ha ha*. But it was pretty funny. I was actually in jail overnight. The police were making little cardboard crucifixes *Ha ha ha*. and shoving them at me and telling me they were gonna keep me there until the sun came up. I definitely had an interesting night that night!

Slater Did you *really* bite the guy in the ankle, or was it just a nip?

Willis Inasmuch as someone can bite someone through a leather boot.

[The meal returns.]

Willis What have they done with the broccoli?



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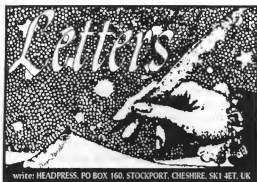
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When I first read a loaned copy of your article [SEX, MURDER AND RAW POWER - HEADPRESS #8] by Douglas D. Clark, I was incensed at such sleaze. But then I recognised the plagiarism, untruths, and who the author is.

Douglas Clark, and his girlfriend, Carol Bundy, abducted, tortured, mutilated, and then murdered a series of women in LA, in the "Sunset Slayer" case. Then Clark decapitated most or all of the victims.

After his arrest, police forensics determined that Clark's semen was in various openings of the severed heads found in his freezer and home. Very sick!

Without wishing to dignify his writings with an extensive reply or successful rebuttal, let me say just this - I do not, nor have I ever known Clark, but I know of him. Ditto Buono. He does not know me, but I know of him. Is that clear enough?

After Compton's arrest, and my discovery of her crime, I ceased communication with her. As she sat in a jail cell with Carol Bundy, she began correspondence with him. If his sharing crime photos with her, and she sending him a used feminine sanitary tissue in the mail, is a boyfriend-girlfriend relationship, then I suppose Clark could be correct.

There are no phones near any cells on the jail floor I was on. His recall is total fabrication. Clark is an intelligent manipulator of the truth, and an adept at pandering fantasy. And you gave him space for his snail excrement he calls "truth."

The real story will eventually come out, and I deny his claims. I get about one letter a year from "sickos", "psychos", and "groupies". My response is a proper burial in the water closet.

Well, enough is enough. Although you are obviously a bizarre, alternate publication, what happened to ethics and avoiding fraud? You are subject to British jurisprudence, are you not? I'll have to look into that.

Ken Bianchi, Walla Walla, Washington

Ken is currently serving life imprisonment for the Hillside Strangler murders in the 70s. He claims he was falsely convicted and confessed to the crime under hypnosis. We put his comments to Clark and received this response.

Bianchi most certainly does know me. We were in '7000' unit in the county jail together for over a year, see, but I was not the mouthy cocksucker he was, so he may have been so wrapped up in his rat role, he did not pay much attention to those around him.

Just for his info: one victim was decapitated [in the Sunset Slayer case]. Carol Bundy was forced to admit she decapitated her paedophile-lover/co-killer Jack Murray when the tightly woven frame-up she had constructed, to blame me for that, as well as her other crimes fell apart. The coroner stated the two, female and Jack, were decapitated in a very precise and identical fashion. So, while Ken likes the "truth" so much, let's begin with the fact he is a goddamned liar: only one victim, of the six female victims, was decapitated. Next, Jack Murray's (A+ blood-type) semen was found in the one severed female head, not Clark's semen (O+ blood-type) as this whining loser in Walla Walla wishes to claim.

Douglas Clark, San Quentin, California

Read the full story of the Sunset Murder case in the upcoming book Critical Vision, due out soon

I have a problem, and I hope You can help me?

I'm a very slim Men with a special Preference for Plump, Chubby, Snug, Cosy Women!! they are have very big Breast's and a fleshy big Bag side, width Hips.

I love simply soft and warm women!!.

But in Germany I found no one who Published Magazines about big Women.

AND I'am VERY INTRESTTIT about HARDCORE Pornos.

Can You tell me how and where from I can get such Erotica?

Josef Ruhsarner, Germany

Hmm. You may be more succesful in your quest if you check out lonely hearts ads in your local papers. There seem to be quite a lot of overweight ladies requiring slim guys in such ads over here. If that proves to be unsuccessful, take a large ball of dough, place it in a polythene bag and into a pan of warm water. When the dough absorbs the heat, remove it from the bag, coat it with olive oil and have a bit of fun with it. Anyone with other advice for Josef, or photos of big fat ladies please write in.

Just a note to say 'thanks' for the positive review of my Good Taste Gone Bad book. When you're mentioned next to a guy with a finger up his ass sucking his own cock you know you've made it! I especially enjoyed the 'so glossy you could sit on it and slide around on the carpet' line.

Your pal,

Mitch O'Connell, Chicago

Thanks for taking the time to respond to our review, Mitch. The ironic thing is I had a go at scooting down the stairs on the book, went too fast, lost control, and ended up lying in a tangled heap with my dick in my mouth and a coat-rack up my ass! Anyone who already has Mitch's book ought not to try such stunts. Anyone who doesn't have it ought to get it. See last issue.

Could you send me a sample of your journal of Sex Religion Death, please? Is this Fem Dom (what I seek)?

I understand this for adults only. I'll be glad to return £3.50 for each – are there several issues to order? I am interested if you cover an ultimate Female Domination to death approach.

Larry Savitch, Seattle

What's wrong with sending the money up front, Larry? Sorry, but we don't cater for freeloaders.

It was interesting to read that Whitehouse are still going strong [*Last issue – Eds.*]. Recall seeing them play in Birmingham – what must be 10 years ago – and it was a pretty unforgettable experience. They placed chairs in front of the stage and the unwary people who seated themselves in them for the performance actually got physically attacked by a member of the band during the set. Somewhat fearful for our safety, we left early for an SPK gig across town. Those were the days!

Miles Woods, London

Miles contributes a visit to the Century Theater this issue.

With reference to that story about 'The Real Yorkshire Ripper' (*Headpress* 7), it reminded me of something I saw written on a bog wall just after [Peter] Sutcliffe was arrested. It was in a pub called 'The Bear and Staff' in Leicester Square. I didn't write it down or anything, but it stayed in my memory

because of what it said: 'Ho, Ho. They think they've got the Ripper. But he only did six, and I did the rest. They won't catch me.' It freaked me out at the time, and after reading that piece, it freaks me out even more.

Roger Sabin, London

The piece in question had it that Sutcliffe was but a copycat killer and the Real Yorkshire Ripper, a man living and working in Ireland but travelling regularly to the mainland, was still at large and still killing. There was a confession on audio tape and several curious facts to support this claim.

*I sent cash \$\$ for a zine
and never received it
Please send to*

*Jennifer Goodwin
P.O. Box 571143
TARZANA, CA 91357*

I sent cash \$\$ for a zine and never received it. Please send to: Jennifer Goodwin, PO Box 571143, Tarzana, CA 91357. Thankyou.

Jennifer

'Jennifer' has obviously gone to great pains and expense \$\$ scrutinizing Factsheet 5 and mailing these standard xeroxed letters around the world. Let's all send 'her' something nice.



Photo: Anthony Perkovich

PEOPLE WHO READ HEADPRESS #3 • Tiffany Mynx relaxing between takes



More stuff. Wording in **bold** refers to a contact address at the end of the guide. Prices listed in *italics* are cover prices – it may be wise to add something for postage. Better still, why not inquire direct, enclosing an SAE/IRC and tell them you read about them in Headpress.

MAGAZINES



Listen Up!

As the title may suggest, **Listen Up!** [*\$3.00*], a cheaply put together rag of a dozen pages or so, takes on board some of the back lip prevalent in Jim and Debbie Goad's **ANSWER Me!** But whereas that magazine is funny and intelligent with it, **Listen Up!** is inarticulate, unoriginal, and... well, piss, basically. Read why sex is dirty, Rock music is awful, Andy Kaufman is God, baby's suck. Whole pages given over to single poems, fabricated personal ads, garbage culled from other sources (Hey, wanna know the similarities between Lincoln and Kennedy?!). While some of the artwork is good, more of it is awful. Have only ever seen two issues of this. Let's hope there isn't a third. (The editor, Brian Johnson, also does the horror movies zine *They Won't Stay Dead*.)

The delightfully titled **Sewer Cunt** [*DKK 30/\$4.00/\$3.00*] chucks up a barge load of vitriol and filth. Nasty is as nasty does, issue #1 contains comic art

by editor Sverre H. Kristensen; crime fiction and crime fact by Gerard J. Schaefer, Manson trivia, and, best of all, Mannheim Jerkoff's 10 fave porno films (*Colour Climax No.291, The Best of Pain 1-12...*). That said, **Sewer Cunt** never once feels like an original piece of work, but remains instead victim to the ideas and philosophies of its three principal interview subjects: Nikolas Schreck, Nick Bougas, and John Aes-Nihil. The Social Darwinist brat pack. These themselves would have proven interesting interviews, but the editor takes it all to heart and all too seriously, hanging on every word and building a magazine around it. If you want pop stars go read *Smash Hits*. A full-colour cover and decent production values is pretty unheard of for this type of thing, but then maybe in Denmark they're up to something we have yet to hear about? Watch this space, its got the capacity to get better.

In a similar boat but on a more even keel, landlubbers, is the second issue of **Compulsion** [*UK £2/Europe £3/USA \$5*]. An interview with John Aes-Nihil, an entertaining interview with that Goad couple; Nine Inch Nails: Scorn; Charnel Music; and a whole bag of music and book reviews. Digest-size and 80-pages, **Compulsion** hails from Scotland where examples of such rationality are rare, so editor Tony Dickie assures us.

With an abundance of notices and explanations as to who and what publishes the thing, **Poo Poo Magazine** [*Issue #6, \$2.00*] carries a 'zine swapping policy' scribed upon its last pages. Basically, you send them your latest up-to-date publishing endeavour and they reserve the right to send you any old junk in return ... if they send anything at all. What a bargain. There is also a note warning the reader to 'check the credits of every zine you buy' and thus avoid supposed underground publications issued by major record labels. This itself coming from a magazine where everyone involved is working under a ridiculous pseudonym. Content-wise – following several pages of overwrought reaction to a letter of criticism in which the editor makes a complete ass of him/herself – **Poo Poo Magazine** is a collection of reviews and rants on the likes of MTV, bondage and domination, strange news clippings, and (a pretty funny criticism of) 1970s toys.

Sink Full of Dishes [*Issue #2, \$2.00*] comes in at a mere 20 pages. Lots of editorializing and



crummy art. Contributions include people's dreams, poems and songs! Yes, songs!! Issue two has one or two reviews of comicbooks, a brief rant on why men shouldn't stare at women and a terrible short story (one paragraph) called *Green Blood* which has nothing to do with the mad doctor of Blood Island. For the most part articles are indicative of the unnamed editor seemingly using any contribution that comes along, no matter how poorly written.



Wow!

Fans of bite-size chews and garaetastic pop sounds will be happy in the knowledge that *Moral Sense* #4 [£1.50] is out now. Bags of record reviews (short, too, the kind we like) and interviews with The Gories, The Brood, The Woggles, The Phantom Surfers, and Damien Hurst go to make the latest number. More rounded with a greater (moral) sense of occasion than the previous outings, this latest issue hits the number with its jive talking funky mother pants. Curiously, though, while the dinky record reviews carry the names of the respective author, the four-page interviews carry no names. Written by nobody.

Beyond the cover, where the title of the magazine is overshadowed by the caution 'ADULTS ONLY', the first issue of *Hidden Detail* [£1.25] provides a selection of film reviews, written badly. What's more, with little exception, they're the self-same films that have pulled a review from every two-bit joker with access to a photocopy machine since time immemorial. Two pages devoted to Mario Bava's *A Bay of Blood* widescreen; *Mark of the Devil*; *Island of Death*. Not a solitary original observation in any one of them. To its credit, *Hidden Detail* does come up with a couple of bizarre pom obscurities and a pretty whacked six-page critique of Antonioni's *Blowup* (which describes David Hemmings' real-time blowup of the still photograph he has taken in the park as 'one of the most excitingly tense cinematic sequences ever filmed!'). Issue #2 is out now and it's even worse, with a letters page that *Viz* comic would kill for and a comparative video cut/video uncut mentality that is so retentive your spinster positively puckers just reading it.

A very cool debut is Alex Smith's *Macho Paranoia* [£1.50]. An interview with crime fiction author Derek Raymond; the search for the true aphrodisiac (anyone recall those ads in British porn mags of yesteryear? 'Make Her Want To Suck You' potion? Just how feasible does that sound to you, dear reader - ingesting a liquid which creates the desire to suck a man's penis?); castration and eunuchs through the ages; favourite action macho films; and Lori Barbero, Babes In Toyland drummer, talking about how she has never once masturbated

in her life. All of which is bound in fake crocodile skin binding (made of paper). Issue #2 promises to be called 'Peek-a-booboo'.

The third issue of *ByPass* [£1.20/\$3.00], the A to Z directory of what's on in the counter culture, is out now. From *The Abolition of Work*, revised and updated edition, to *Zend*, sci fi anthology comic, by way of *How To Write Erotic Books and Stories*. There are hundreds of thumbnail reviews and contacts here, no mistake. Always a whole bunch of stuff you won't have a clue about, plus it's easy on the eye with some nifty graphics to boot. Small press anarchists never die, they just build libraries.

Sixty blaxploitation film reviews. That's the kind of thing we like here at Headpress Gutters. And that's the kind of thing you'll get with issue #4 of New Zealand's finest, *Killer Kung-Fu Enema Nurses* [£2.00/\$5.00]. Discover which black flicks are banned in NZ while reading all about the likes of *Disco Godfather*, *Black Shampoo*, *The Legend of Nigger Charlie*, and *White Dog*. Makes no attempt to be a complete listing, but coupled with the opening Who's Who of Blaxploitation, an informative and boss listing nonetheless. Also this issue: the dawning of Kirk Giffill's fascination with wrestling women,

and part two of an interview with director Peter Jackson. Next issue, if it ain't already out, is scheduled to be 'Special Strange Sex'.

Three issues later and Harvey Fenton's *Flesh & Blood* [£3.00] has developed from a sibling Xerox pamphlet of a thing into a



full-colour cover, 60 A4-page beast of a mag. As small press Adult Cinema zines go (Adult as in horror film fans stepping out of the closet and acknowledging their fascination with porn), *Flesh & Blood* is one of the best; well written, interesting and entertaining. Of course, the world could have done without yet another Peter Jackson interview, but the on-going guide to British horror more than makes up for it. That's 20 pages devoted to movies made in Britain during the years 1973/74. However, the article on Prosthetic Sex - a kind of novelty



Macho Paranoia

sub-genre of porn based upon the larger than life (fake) attributes of its principle actors/actresses – is the gold nugget here. A well-researched and absorbing investigation. It must have been hell.

Literally bursting from its staples springs the twelfth issue of the Hammer Films mag, *Little Shoppe of Horrors* [\$6.95]. A truly immaculate presentation, everything you needed to know – and much you didn't – about the movies and personnel of the British production company. This covers an awful lot of ground, and, whether a Hammer devotee or not, most readers will garner much of interest. The latest concentrates on Dennis Wheatley, covering the company's filmic forays into the black arts (*The Devil Rides Out*, *To The Devil ... A Daughter*) whilst interviewing anyone within hollering distance of their creation.

There have been rumours that issue #11 of *Film Threat Video Guide* [£4.00/\$4.95] is the last. Certainly, editor Dave Williams has pretty much cut himself off from the outside world these last few months. With that in mind, the cover article – '25 Underground Films You Must See', reprints and updates of reviews to have appeared in previous issues – might be construed as a best-of retro. We do hope the rumours are unfounded – *FTVG* has been a staple document to low-budget filmmaking over the years. Anyway, along with the aforementioned headlining article, issue #11 contains an interview with Adi Sideman, director of *Chicken Hawk*, a fly on the wall documentary concerning NAMBLA (North American Man Boy Love Association) and the anti-NAMBLA group, Straight Kids USA. Says a spokesperson for the former: "There are good paedophiles and there are bad paedophiles. We are good paedophiles."

Headpress regular and general handyman Steve Green releases issue #4 of *Gaijin*, a magazine which has taken as its theme, 'Secret Fears and Private Pleasures'. Amongst its intimacies: one writer on how she enjoyed her first labial piercing; Deborah Ryder on pain, passion and control; tattoos; innocence... A veritable spectrum of personal experience written in a personal, conversational manner. The substantial letters pages are given over to a realm of existence beyond that of most men's understanding – unless, of course, something big went down in the issues that we missed. Free for postage stamps, other zines, or cash.

Nudging its way to issue #6 comes *Shock Cinema* [UK \$5/\$5.4], a typically eclectic and brilliant collection of movie reviews from the pen of Steve Puchalski. Homegrown no-hopers run alongside Hollywood's finest, receiving equal air space. This issue we rub shoulders with the likes of *Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla*, *Wedding Trough* (aka *Vase de Noces*, aka *The Pig Fucking Movie*), *La Grande Bouffe*, *Traces of Death*, *The Chelsea Girls*... We've said it before, we'll say it again: One of the

finest.

Pagan Voice [£1.00] is a monthly newspaper of paganism and magick. Issue #24 features Tony Linsell, author of *Anglo-Saxon Runes*, and his pal Brian Partridge. *MFTEQ* #10 [£2.00] has *Scorn*, *Mother Destruction*, *Godflesh*, and mucho rekord reviews. Vol 3 No 4 of *The Masquerade Erotic Newsletter* [\$5.00] has a great photo set taken from within the confines of a peepshow dancefloor – see da man press his face against da glass and watch da gurls! *The Chatt* [\$10.00] is a contact magazine for the sexually adventurous (living in Canada). *Asian Trash Cinema* [\$6.00] issue #5 has indepth reviews of *Captured for Sex*, *My Soul Is Slashed* and *Violent Classroom*. Vol 2 issue #10 of its big sister publication, *European Trash Cinema*, has a critique of the Black Emanuelle series, plus reviews of *Farewell Uncle Tom*, *Gore In Venice*, and *Adrenaline*. Savoy's increasingly apocalyptic *Reverbstorm* hits issue #3 (possibly #4 and fever pitch by the time you read this). While *Meng & Ecker* is back with issue 8. Not only is it now the 'best comicbook on earth' but also winner of five – yes, five, count them – Eagle awards and numerous Comic Creators Guild Awards. And deserve them it does too. *The Azrael Project Newsletter* [\$5.00], vol 4 no 2, details the atmospheric similarities during encounters with a death entity and provides a pen pal listing for folk into all manner of nocturnal weirdness. This is produced by Lillah Wendell, whose purpose it is to 'put forth the word of the Angel of Death and thereby conquer fear through understanding'. Amen to that.

BOOKS

"Again my audience were holding their breath. I had to provide them with other raw truths. The photograph of a rhinoceros's behind was projected..." One of the all-time classics sees a reprint courtesy of Creation Books: Salvador Dali's *Diary of a Genius* (£8.95). The surrealist painter's surrealist notes during the years 1952 to 1963 – an utterly compelling journey with perhaps the last great iconoclast of the Twentieth century. From investigating his stools each morning through to twiddling his moustache and working on a film script which, ultimately, would never see the light of day, Dali's *Diary* captures the obsession – *the insane little nuances* – which drove the artist to create. The food he would not eat; the tight shoes he would wear; his 'Dalinian' rewriting of articles clipped from magazines; the all-powerful love for his wife Gala. Creation have judged well to drop the 'Excerpt from The Art of Farting' appendix which adorned the previous Picador edition of this book, to include instead an introduction by J.G. Ballard. This is an immense book, and one we urge you to buy forthwith. Also from Creation Books the anthology, *The Starry Wisdom* (£9.95/\$15.95). A selection of contemporary writers and artists whose work, whether directly or indirectly, has been inspired by the literature of H.P. Lovecraft. If not inspired, then addressing the self-same paranoias, sense of the

fantastic, and impending desolation (in a parallel universe). Of course, being a contemporary collection, many of the works herein would probably mortify ol' H.P. with their unbridled in your face manner (indeed, one of the finer pieces in the book, Simon Whitechapel's 'Walpurgisnachtmusik', garners a forewording disclaimer from the publisher). Editor D.M. Mitchell contributes a couple of stories. His 'Ward 23' – besides something of an in-joke with its free use of real characters – utilises the 'diary of a broken mind' approach to storytelling so cherished by Lovecraft. Other authors include D.F. Lewis, Michael Gira, William Burroughs, Ramsey Campbell, Alan Moore, and J.G. Ballard. A 30-page graphic interlude is provided with John Coulthart's exquisitely rendered interpretation of 'The Call of Cthulhu'. As with most anthologies, the differing styles in *The Starry Wisdom* don't always sit comfortably together. But the preposterous correlation of 'Cthulhu Mythos in a post-modern landscape' is a clever one and ultimately makes for a satisfying read.

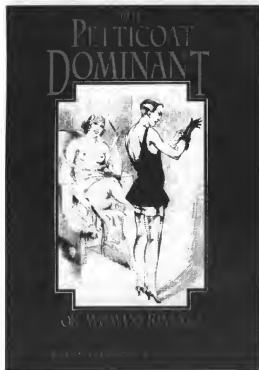
Most people growing up in Seventies Britain will recall the proliferation of youth-gone-awry novels put out by the likes of New English Library. A stark cover photo of some kid (with his bird) with tattoos leering out at prospective readers. The most famous of these books now belong to Richard Allen and his 'Skinhead' series. But Mick Norman must run a close second, turning out four novels centred around another band of youthful misfits: the Hell's Angels. *Angels from Hell*, *Angel Challenge*, *Guardian Angels* and *Angels On My Mind*. Creation have packaged all four titles under the one cover – *Angels from Hell* (£8.95/\$16.95). These are British Hell's Angels, written at a time when panic news was sweeping across from the States of outlaw bands of motorcyclists. In Norman's books the outlaws terrorize places like Birmingham and London and live in a hide-out in the mountains of Snowdonia. They talk about Arsenal Football Club and have mamas with names like Brenda. (Though one guy is called Kafka.) The pace of the stories never slips below 100mph and each follows a formula combining American romanticism with gritty urban reality. A fairly typical excerpt runs as follows: 'A waitress in a hamburger joint had been rude about his appearance so he'd simply vaulted over the counter and knocked her out. While she was still unconscious, he'd pulled out five of her teeth with a rusty pair of pliers he always carried with him. Then he'd screwed her. Now, that was real class!' These books will never be anything more than the period piece of a trashy era, nevertheless they remain mindlessly entertaining.

'A glorious celebration of sensual love' comes our way courtesy of Robinson Publishing. *The Mammoth Book of Erotica* (£6.99) – just what we need in our dreary editors lives, a bit of the erotic.



600 fucking pages of it. We're liable to erotic ourselves to death. Still, there's little way either one of your humble editors is going to manage to slip 600 pages past mother and the bathroom door. Can't they use smaller print or something? Robinson's 'Mammoth' series of books: they've done everything from a Mammoth *Great Detective Stories* to a Mammoth book of *Werewolves*. Surprisingly, it's taken all of 29 Mammoth volumes to finally get as far as *Erotica*. Fortunately, the editor is (crime author) Maxim Jakubowski which enables a kind of asfance attitude to the proceeding. Authors include Kathy Acker, Lisa Tuttle, Leonard Cohen, Samuel Delaney, Ramsey Campbell, Robert Silverberg, and that old chestnut, Clive Barker – so, stories delving into gang-banging, anal sex, schoolgirl fetishes, really should come as little surprise.

More cliterature comes from that bastion of antediluvian erotica **Delectus Books** with their publication of *The Petticoat Dominant or, Woman's Revenge* [£19.95 + post £1.20 UK, £1.80 Europe, £5.00 else-where]. A young aristocratic gent is packed off to an isolated country house inhabited by a group of domineering governesses. Right from the off he is forced to dress as a maid and suffer all manner of humiliation and sexual punishment. No sooner has one elderly governess' finger been removed from his anus than his tongue is instructed to penetrate hers. Or he is forced to consume the discharge of another's menstruating vagina, or eat his food from the piss-pot of another.



The expected whippings and beatings occur at regular intervals, but it's the scatological leanings that give this work a bit of a sharp edge. Originally printed in 1898 and available only in hardback. Write for a catalogue.

VIDEO

Made In Hong Kong have another deluge of Oriental delights out in the shops. This batch includes a couple of early Jackie Chan re-releases namely *Snake in the Eagle's Shadow* and *Drunken Master*. Both are a mixture of Chinese comedy and martial arts. Unfortunately, as with most Oriental humour, the comedy rarely hits the mark, much of it too juvenile. The funniest sequence in *Snake* has a kung fu expert demonstrating his skills to a potential pupil of the school. About to punch through a pile of bricks, the pupil's wealthy father points out that masters at the school down the road can break twice as many with a single punch. More bricks are mounted up and after succeeding in breaking 'the lot the man scurries into the building to blow on his bloated, purple hand. Clichéd and hackneyed but so what, it brought out an audible laugh in the Headpress viewing room. The fight sequences are fine but not allowed to fully develop or generate excitement because of the comic relief. They also seem a tad slow by today's full-throttle standards. Will be more appreciated by dedicated Chan fans.

Five Venoms is a Shaw brothers classic from 1978 and making its video debut. A pupil is instructed to track down five rogue fighters, each identifiable only by their own distinctive fighting style; scorpion, snake, toad, lizard and centipede. All are discovered but the scorpion remains a mystery until the closing moments. Contains some strong torture and rather nasty murders with a hook and needle. The fights and insanely exaggerated sound effects that make you yearn for the good old days when real cinemas could be found in every British town.

Another title currently available is the Shaw bros classic *Mad Monkey Kung Fu*. Directed by and starring Liu Chia Liang it tells the story of a performer who has his hands crippled by a head gangster and his sister taken into a brothel. Reduced to a marketplace entertainer with a pet monkey, he is constantly harassed by a gang of thugs demanding protection money. When they kill his monkey he teaches a friend the *Mad Monkey kung fu* skills and together



they storm the brothel seeking revenge. The clownish antics are again juvenile but there are enough great fights – particularly good is the one with the boss – to satisfy anyone.

Moon Warriors is a splendid period drama action-packed epic. Not-so-original story: good prince in exile hiding from his evil brother and wanting to reclaim his throne gets the help of a common fisherman and [cringe]... a killer whale. Okay, so the inclusion of a killer whale is a bit too Disney, but it only makes a few appearances. There's a great moment involving kites and a welcome avoidance



of humour, although the dialogue between the fisherman and princess, each trying to achieve one-upmanship, is genuinely amusing. Brilliant conflicts, breathtaking swordfights, sumptuous photography and fine acting.

John Woo's *A Better Tomorrow II* is a worthy sequel with Chow Yun Fat reappearing despite dying in the first movie. Here he plays [you've guessed it] the twin brother working in a restaurant in the States. He returns to Honk Kong to help friends of his brother tackle the bad guys. The finale is way, way over the top when the four good guys casually stroll into a house chock full of gangsters. Gun/axe/sword battles don't come much bigger or better than this. Smell that nitrocellulose! The sugary moment comes when the young cop is mortally wounded – shot in



the belly at the moment his wife gives birth – and dies while speaking to her over the phone before naming the child.

More gun mayhem too in Liu Chia Liang's *Tiger on the Beat*. This vehicle of violence also stars Chow Yun Fat as a maverick cop pursuing a drugs syndicate with partner Conan Lee. Plenty of laughs

& slaughter with a stunning chain-saw duel at the end. All the MIHK titles retail around £10 and if you haven't started getting them then you're missing some of the most refreshing videos available. Write for catalogue of other titles.

From Tartan Video come *Hearts of Darkness*, the brilliant documentary about the making of *Apocalypse Now*. The special boxed edition comes complete with Eleanor Coppola's book *Notes - The Making of Apocalypse Now*. Ingmar Bergman's *The Virgin Spring* is the inspiration for Wes Craven's thoroughly hideous *Last House on the Left*. A young girl, traveling to church is raped and murdered by two goat-herdsmen while their young brother watches. After stealing her clothes they seek shelter for the night at the girl's home. Her mother recognizes the clothing they attempt to sell. The girl's father murders them the following morning, even dashing the child against the wall. Particularly brutal for its time *The Virgin Spring* still packs a wallop. Mario Bianco's glossy but redundant *Dark Waters* should have been condensed into a short film rather than running as a feature. The plot is unfathomable and the whole thing seems like an exercise in imitating your favourite director, in Bianco's case Dario Argento. A faithful adaptation of Ian McEwan's novel, *The Cement Garden* is a casual revisit to William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*. A watchful eye on adolescents who are suddenly without parents and left to fend for themselves in the world. What's more, it's a changing world, increasingly manipulated and modelled on the stronger of those left to inhabit it. In the case of *The Cement Garden*, this strength is not one of physical might but dominance of a sexual kind. A sexual tension between brother and sister. Unlike Golding's novel, the island here is not an allegory but the secular parameters established by Andrew Birkin's choking direction. Tight camera angles, flies buzzing around the dirty dishes piling high in the sink, the wretched heat, the cement that fractures in the cellar. This is the micro-society of the orphans. Nothing exists beyond these shores. A boyfriend of the elder girl does come to visit on occasion, but when he leaves we know not where he goes or what he does. Similarly, when the children go to school, they're more *not in the house* than they are *at school*. Given the circumstances, it is little wonder that the boy should turn to his sister for physical comfort. Unforgivably, however, Birkin has painted her in an alluring light so that the viewer too may share the attraction. Because of this, the shock ending (when brother and sister make love) isn't a shock at all, but a quite obvious and natural predicament given the circumstances.

In the manner of their previous video release, *Image 37's Selected Films 1993/94* is a compilation of doctored film stock and subverted images. Those familiar with Damon Barr's work will know what to



The Visitant

expect; others will be shocked, bored, irritated and possibly a little astonished in equal measures. Furthering Barr's apparent necessity to combine both film and the human body to create its own miasmic entity, the majority of short pieces contained herein explore the darker aspects of what any one individual might be capable of doing should a camera lens be turned upon them. It is the irrational extension to those waving hordes who shout "Hi, Mom!" whenever a news camera takes to the street. Here, it isn't a wave and an idiotic grin, but a naked figure drinking his own vomit ('Engorge Again Forever and Always'), throwing up into a glass and drinking it back down; a wild perpetual motion machine. Ultimately, the figure retches himself into a collapsed state. Or then there is 'Body Study Extracts', partially bleached film stock smeared with various bodily fluids and fed through the projector: semen-stained film; menstrual-blood; saliva; faeces; urine, all erupting into a kind of MTV pop video happening. It comes as something of a relief – and is ultimately satisfying – to know that such a document exists. In a similar vein, 'Glimpses of a Private Ritual' allows the viewer access to a naked man as he pisses into a pot and guzzles some of it back down while pouring the rest over himself. On a more lateral note, 'The Visitant' concerns a ghostly figure prowling naked, penis semi-erect, toward the sound of a shower. Or is it static.

MUSIC

Do Marvel comics still produce their *What If?* title. What if the Hulk and the Human Torch got it on? You know, weird team-ups. One such pairing might be what if Diamanda Galás and John Paul Jones made an album together? And it was called *The Sporting Life*. And was released by Mute Records? What a team-up that would be – the weird screechy performance one and the ex-bass player from Led Zep. How would they gel, coming from totally different musical backgrounds and all? For a start, it would have to have a driving Rock beat – otherwise what would Paul Jones do – but then again, Galás isn't exactly known for her regular musical composition (she did an album of Blues and Gospel covers, that's about it as far as regular singing goes). How would she tackle verse-chorus verse-chorus? What they'd probably do is deconstruct Rock 'n' Roll. Like poke fun at Led Zep. They'd do tracks that were very much pure Rock songs, and with Galás' penchant for man-hating, throw in a bunch of anti-Rockist lyrics. It would be like the Rolling Stones' *Some Girls* in reverse. They would, of course, have a couple of tracks that weren't at all like this, a bit Eastern sounding perhaps, just to let the listeners know that they weren't really Rock musicians, not really – or at least Galás wasn't. And the opening track would borrow dialogue from Pee Wee's *Big Adventure* to really fuck things over. That's probably a good way to terrorise the Rock establishment.

We've always thought that Laibach walked a treacherously unsteady line; that they were about to topple into a quagmire of their own vomit any second. That kind of band always do, with their synthesizers and posturing. Well, if anyone can write in and tell us here at *Headpress* how a cover of 'In The Army Now' could conceivably be better than the Status Quo original – which was the nadir of tripe anyway – they can have our copy of *NATO* [Mute], Laibach's newest recording. If that isn't enough, the whole album consists of cover versions of 'war' songs. Believe us, any President forced to sit through this lot would hack off his own leg to get at the Big Button. Edwin Starr's 'War', Pink Floyd's 'Dogs of War', Europe's 'Final Countdown', they're all here procuring the Laibach treatment.

They've been coming thick and fast these past few months. Another dog to bite Butch's bog roll is Kitchens of Distinction, *Cow Boys and Aliens* [One Little Indian]. This is the kind of 'pleasant' sounding band producing clever sounding pop one could easily, and without remorse, bag-up and dump in the nearest river. Turn your amplifiers down boys, you're causing a draft.

An interesting couple of albums by way of Slant, a three-piece. *The Canning Town Chronicle...* and

the eponymous *Slant*, both on the **Sound & Language** label. The former is something of a concept album and, as with many such albums, restricted by its own concept. The old Ray Davies tune, *Dead End Street* pokes its nose in. (Street, town, geddit?) Oh, it's slowed down and mutated alright, but that only makes it go on for longer. Totally unnecessary. Of course, everything can only be as strong as its weakest link. And it didn't help matters none to discover *Canning Town* is based on some performance or other at some poetry thing, heathens that we are. *Slant*, however, is a much more satisfying album. Combining, on occasion, tribal rhythms, sound loops, ethereal female vocals, police walkie-talkie noises, built-in static, but not losing track of a structure to it all, *Slant* does stir up a genuine feeling of anticipation and gloom. There is something unsettling here. Something uneasy. Not a happy album.

It was important for us to like this. With the title *20,000 Leaves Under The Tree* (Solipsist Records), who could fail to smile at The Twiggs? Even the cover looked groovy. The first track played excellently ('Fast Number One', basic chord progression and a wistful chorus). But then came the rest of the album. Suddenly, the whole shuttle came crashing back to earth and what emerged on impact? The revelation that The Twiggs, having played loud and raucously live for several years, upon entering a studio are convinced to 'cool it' by a manager eager for saleability. Perhaps. (Might be a big manager.) Now we have a pleasant album. This sounds like the kind of drivel The Bangles might have come up with (had they been men). This sounds like The Strawberry Alarm Clock – any one album coming with only one track worth a damn.

See For Miles Records have re-released a true platinum truffle in Mellow Candle's *Swaddling Songs*. Recorded back in 1972 for Decca and made available on several occasions since, courtesy limited, rare, expensive collector pressings, *Swaddling Songs* remains one of the most potent Folk Rock recordings of all-time. Begone those images of Fairport Convention. This is no sea shanty, or nimble skip through the orchard with a pyxie hat



(though you could be forgiven looking at the photos on the sleeve), this is the sound of a keyboard being hammered furiously; melodies set to burst; electric guitars; and female harmon-

ies the likes of which you will not hear twice in one lifetime. Buy.

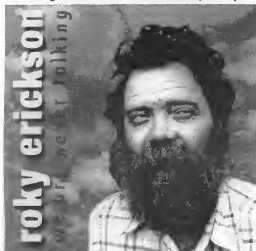
Lots of Can related material this time around by way of The Grey Area of Mute. *Anthology 1968-1993* is exactly what you'd expect with a title like that, a Greatest Hits compilation. Twenty-eight tracks from the German innovators, from the *Monster Movie* album through to *Rite Time* with a bonus number, 'Last Night Sleep'. From their humble Velvetesque beginnings, *Anthology* rides with the band as they explore rhythms and audio collage; as they experiment with ethnic-Rock some years before the likes of Peter Gabriel and Paul Simon set foot in Basingstoke. A fine introduction to Can. For the aficionado, however, the band's *Rite Time* album has been reissued in its entirety. Recorded in 1989, *Rite Time* saw the band back together after a split of 17 years, and is a pretty laid back, summery kind of affair. Still with the Grey Area, one-time Can keyboard player Irmin Schmidt gets a Greatest Hits package all to himself, *Anthology – Soundtracks 1978-1993*. A whopping great 44-tracks, covering the artist's work in film music. Quite understandably, given that the material contained is intended to run parallel with a visual medium, some of the album is a bit flat, seemingly waiting for something to happen. Other parts are better.

Still in Germany, monster rockers Mutter take an unusual detour into the world of Easy Listening with their latest outing, *Hauptsache Musik* [DEG]. Possibly better known outside of their native land for their recent collaborations with filmmaker Jörg Buttgeriet – drummer Florian Koerner von Gustorf plays Schramm in his latest picture; other band members provide the soundtrack – Mutter have been playing together for eight years now, releasing such off-the-wall fare as *I Am Ashamed Of Having Thoughts Offending Other Peoples Dignity, Come, and You Are Not My Brother*. As an introduction to the band, *Hauptsache Musik* is possibly not the best choice, coming over as a cross between the cabaret your parents might go to see on a Saturday evening, and the smoke-filled close to a Sunday morning drinking binge. Come to think of it, maybe it's the best possible choice.



Vicious in a firm handshake kind of way, that's Done Lying Down. Their debut album, *John Austin Rutledge* [Abstract Sounds], is raunchy in all the right places – never blatantly in your face, but at an uncomfortable distance. At times their hook lines

appear to escape them, drifting away moments before the anticipated pay-off, but, all of a sudden, something like 'Pasadina' will crank up and you'll



be catching your breath, sitting down and having a cigarette. Naggingly good. Big guitars, too. A limited edition double pack CD comes complete with the Done Lying Down's back catalogue EP recordings.

Where have you been all these years, Roky? You may still have to ask yourself that question, but at least the man Erickson is back with his first recording since 1932 - a new single (from a forthcoming album). 'We Are Never Talking' [Southern Studios] is every bit the lilting, acoustic, homage you'd expect from a man of Roky's mature years (and beard). It's also a fine tune to boot, twisted and haunting in all the right places. Probably about his wife or something. Or the members of The Thirteenth Floor Elevators.

Also received: The Jesus Lizard, *Down* [Touch and Go]; Solar Enemy, *Proceed To Beyond* [The Rape of Europa] [T.E.Q. Music?]; Ascension, *Five Titles* [Shock]; Richard H. Kirk, *Time High Fiction* [The Grey Area]; Graeme Revell, *Musique Brut Collection* [The Fine Line]; Samian, *Samian* [EastWest]; Blood Cement, *The Hand That Considerately Kills* [Blood Cement]; Hoax!, *Fake Tape* [Hoax!]. We love you all.

Send material for review with all your prices and order details to:

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The Chatter
Chatterley's Publications, Box 128 Station A, Mississauga, CANADA, L5A 277

Compulsion
c/o Tony Dickie, 10 Netherhill Road, Gallowhill, Paisley, PA3 4RE, Scotland, UK

Creation Books
83 Clerkenwell Road, London, EC1M 5RJ, UK

Delectus Books
27 Old Gloucester Street, London, WC1N 3XX, UK

European Trash Cinema
[Address as Asian Trash Cinema]

Fake Tape
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Film Threat Video Guide
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Hidden Detail
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Image 37 Productions
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Killer Kung-Fu Enema Nurses
Rowfil, PO Box 27-432, Upper Willis St Wellington, NEW ZEALAND

Listen Up!
c/o Brian Johnson, 11 Werner Road, Greenville, PA 16125-9434, USA

Little Shoppe of Horrors
c/o Richard Klemensen, PO Box 3107, Des Moines, Iowa 50316, USA

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Pagan Voice
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Poo Poo Magazine
PO Box 8131, Burlington, VT 05402, USA

Reverbstorm
[Address as Meng & Ecker]

Sewer Cunt
c/o S.H. Kristensen, Godthåbsvej 18 A, DK-7400 Herning, DENMARK

Shock Cinema
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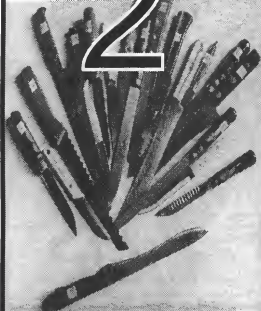
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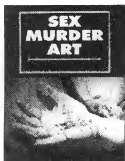
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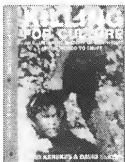
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